AN APPENDIX TO *SOLOMON'S* Prescription For the Removal of the PESTILENCE.

Enforcing the same from a Consideration of the late Dreadful Judgement by FIRE.

Together with some Perswasions to all, especially Suffering Christians, to exercise and maintain Faith and Patience, Courage and Comfort, in this Dark and Cloudy Day.

By *M. M.*

Printed in the Year, MDCLXVII.

APPENDIX

The Stationer to the Reader.

Courteous Reader,

This Discourse being designed as an Appendix to Solomon's *Prescription, ought indeed to be joyned with it (as many of them are) the sense hereof in the beginning having a dependance upon, and connection with the conclusion of that: But yet for the ease of those who had bought of the former (whereof some have been heretofore dispersi) I was willing to Print some of these single. And this Advertisement was thought fit to be given, partly that none might wonder at the absence of a Prefatory Epistle, but chiefly to take off from the seeming abruptness of the beginning, and of some other passages herein, which have a reference to that fore-mentioned Treatise, as they who have it in their hands may easily discern.*

AN APPENDIX TO *SOLOMON*'S PRESCRIPTION For the Removal of the PESTILENCE.

THus indeed have the Pains and Miseries of blessed Saints that have left this life, expired together with their dying groans, whil'st we poor Sinners that are left behinde, have remained to bee the subjects of those farther Calamities;

which the Justice of God brings upon those that contem
and slight such expressions of it, as were design'd f
their Instruction and Reformation: And that most si
nal expression of contemned and incensed Justice, whic
hath lately put us into an astonishment, out of which w
are scarce yet recovered; doth methinks strongly invi
me to attempt some kinde of improvement of it, in pro
secution of the design which I aim'd at in the foregoi
Discourse: The occasion whereof was the consideratio
of the heavy Judgement of the Plague then upon u
and an hearty desire that it might attain some good effe
amongst us; and the business of it is, to represent t
Sins we have been Plagu'd for, and to perswade a re
formation from them, which the hand of God the
stretcht out against us did so loudly call for. And sin
it hath pleased the Divine Majesty to follow that stroke
even whil'st it was yet upon our Loyns, with this seco
little less terrible, it will not I presume be impertine
by way of Appendix to this latter Edition, at least t
make so much use of this sad providence as the
farther to evidence, *That Sins, even such as I have b
fore-mentioned, are the true causes of our Miseries, a
thence to enforce my Exhortation to put away from amongst
those Sins*; for the performance of which Duty, we
furnisht with another so strong but sad an Argume
And though I may be almost in despair of doing any g
hereby, which shall be publick and visible, yet if I mi
but prevent the final ruine of any single Soul, I sh
be far from reckoning my labour lost: Withall I wo
hope to do something towards the vindication of Div
Justice, in these seemingly severe dispensations, and
the quickning and comforting the hearts of his suffe
people.

I take it for granted that the Reader is not so destit
of both Reason and Religion, as to question whet
the

there be a God that rules in the World, or whether he bee Omniſcient and Almighty, without whoſe cognizance and concurrence no Creatures can move, without whoſe foreſight and permiſſion no event can befall: And therefore I hope there's no need that I ſhould concern my ſelf with the original of theſe flames, and endeavour to manifeſt that they were kindled by no humane means, before the finger of God ſhall be acknowledged therein. Since wee know that God ordinarily makes uſe of ſecond cauſes for the execution of his pleaſure; which whil'ſt they execute, there's no neceſſity that they ſhould diſtinctly underſtand what they are doing, and frame deſigns correſpondent to thoſe, which by his over-ruling power they accompliſh: Though *Jehu* was moſt intent upon his own advancement, to which the ruine of *Ahab's* family was ſubſervient; yet God by him fulfill'd the threatings denounc't againſt that Family. Whil'ſt the *Aſſyrian* King was glutting his cruelty, and enlarging his Dominions by the conqueſt of the *Iſraelites*, hee was a Sword in Gods hand to accompliſh his pleaſure on Mount *Zion*. And the difference of their intention from Gods, doth no more hinder their being inſtruments for the performance of his righteous Will, than his turning their actions to his own ends, leſſens the wickedneſs of their intentions. Even *Judas* and the *Jews* fulfil'd the determinate counſel of God. Moreover that he who hath all Creatures at his beck, even the moſt bruitiſh and inanimate, which depend upon him for their Being, Motion, and ſeveral activities, did not either prevent, or check what he ſaw without his interpoſure would produce ſuch and ſuch ſad effects, doth plainly ſpeak that it was his pleaſure they ſhould bee produc't. *As the watchman wakes but in vain, except the Lord keep the City*; ſo, if hee do keep it, all attempts made againſt it ſhall bee in vain. How often

have we had experience of a watchful Providence ſerving us from, or ſoon ſtopping the miſchiefs of nature, which either Treachery or Careleſneſs bringing upon us. Thoſe deſigns which have been contrived with as malicious a ſubtlety as Hell and the Conclave in conjunction were Maſters of, have been diſcovered and fruſtrated; witneſs that our deliverance from the Popiſh Powder-plot, which we yearly Commemorate, and ſhall never ſurely forget whil'ſt the Reformation keeps footing in *England*. And how often have we been Alarum'd with the cry of Fire, which hath been extinguiſhed before we could well know where it was? But when once we have ſin'd our ſelves out of Gods protection, how open do wee lye to all aſſaults? Being expos'd to that wrath, whereof all creatures are ready to be obedient inſtruments, and which none may or can reſiſt. And alas! how plainly did God appear againſt us in the dreadful inſtance of his diſpleaſure? Though he did not indeed immediately rain Fire from Heaven upon us, yet there was ſuch a concurrence of circumſtances to make it ſo long unquenchable and raging, as may abundantly convince us, that it was under the command and ſentence of an higher, even an uncontroleable power. May wee not bee allow'd to ſay, that it was blown up and kept in vigour even by the breath of the Lord, if the winds may be ſo ſtil'd: upon the wings whereof the Flames being mounted, rode as in a Chariot, triumphing along the Streets, laughing at Engines, baffling Art and Induſtry, maſtring and overcoming all oppoſitions that were made againſt them; in three or four dayes ſpace deſtroying the Works of many hundred Years, and the Wealth and Labours of many thouſand Inhabitants: and yet that it ſhould ſtop where and when it did, is almoſt as much a wonder as that it ſhould be ſtopt no ſooner: and both are ſo ſtrange, arguing a more than ordi-

providence, that we may reasonably infer, that he who said to the proud flame, *Thou shalt come no further*, did also say to them, *Hither shall you come*. So that we may fully allude to that of the Prophet, *Isa.* 66. 15. *The Lord is come with Fire, and with his Chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebukes with flames of Fire.*

And if be granted that it was the Lord who brought this *evil upon the City*, it will not then I hope be questioned but he hath justly done it; with none I am sure but with Atheists will it be questioned: For he who denies Gods Justice, doth in effect deny him to be God; that is, a Being infinitely perfect. Moreover, such is Gods gracious and merciful nature, that we may be assured he is not delighted in his Creatures sufferings, which he never inflicts but for some just and weighty cause; yea, I may say, which they scarce ever undergo, but when they foolishly and wilfully pluck them upon their own heads. Strange it is that Man, to whom Self-love is a natural and inseparable property, should contrive his own ruine: or if you say it is not ruine that he purposely contrives, yet as strange it seems, that hee who is endowed with Reason, whereby he is capable of knowing the nature, and attending to the consequences of things, should so greedily embrace the cause, and will not be driven from it, whil'st he hates the effect, and would fain avoid it. But as strange as this seems, and as great a blemish as it laies upon humane nature, yet most true it is, and too strongly confirmed by daily sad experience. Fain would men separate what the unalterable Law of the Creator hath joyned together, Sin and Misery: and though they know, or may know that they cannot have one without the other, yet will they venture upon what they love, the certainly attended with that which they cannot endure, and so most justly, *They eat the fruit of their own*

are fill'd with their own devices. Thus it is in the present case; with eagerness and delight have we procur'd to our selves those evils which wee bitterly lament. We that ran so earnestly to quench our burning houses, with our own hands set them on fire. We that are now in so perplext and destitute a condition, have even wilfully plung'd our selves into these difficulties: for in the settled course of Gods government of the world, there is as great a connexion betwixt sin unrepented of, and sore judgements, either in this life or the next, as betwixt throwing Granado's into an house, and its being thereby burnt to the ground. Yet mistake me not, as if I thought that they who suffer most are the greatest sinners, and that the City was so much more wicked than the Country, as its sufferings are greater: But only this I dare safely say, that Sin is the great Incendiary of our Land, the Traytor and Destroyer that hath done us so much mischief, even the sins of all, and therefore hath a Judgement befaln us, wherein there are few but are concern'd, either for themselves or relations, or at leastwise, as members of that Commonalty which suffers so greatly: and those particular persons upon whom it hath faln heaviest, though there may be many that have deserved as ill, who perhaps fare better than they, yet have they no reason to think that they have far'd worse than they deserv'd. God himself directs us in our enquiries after the cause of such calamities, *Deut.* 29. 22, 23, 24, 25. When any should ask why the Land was made like *Sodome* and *Gomorrah*, Brimstone, Salt and Burning, the answer was to be returned, because they had forsook the Covenant of the Lord God of their Fathers. This Apostacy from God, is the usual cause of the destruction of Kingdomes. So *Isa.* 42. 24. *Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? Did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned? for they would*

walk in his wayes, neither were they obedient unto his Law: wherefore we may well say, *This evil is of our selves, our own doings have procured all these things to us.*

If now you ask mee, What doings? what sins those are which have provokt God thus speedily to repeat his rashes? I answer, They are even such as I have before made a rehearsal of; and which I shall not now particularly enlarge upon; but especially our continuance in, and revolting to these sins, as it were in despite of those remarkable Judgements, which have been employ'd to turn us from them. The Pride and Covetousness, the Whoredomes and Drunkenness, which have abounded amongst us; our cruel Animosities and Divisions, Uncharitableness and Oppression, Contempt of God and Godliness, prophanation of Lords-daies, and neglect of his Ordinances and Worship; such as these are the doings which have brought our miseries upon us. But which is the grand aggravation of all; After we had been stricken for these sins, were we grieved and reformed? Nay, rather have we not revolted more and more? Did we *in our affliction acknowledge our offence, and seek the face of God?* Did we *return to him that had torn, that he might heal us; to him that had smitten, that he might binde us up?* Or rather, were we not like *Jerusalem* of whom God complains, *Zeph.* 3. *That being filthy, polluted, and an oppressing City, she obeyed not the voice, nor received correction; being unjust, they knew no shame; and therefore hee made their streets waste that none past by, their Cities were destroyed there was no Inhabitant.*

Were not the fears we before mentioned of a return of all kinde of impiety, too prophetical? Where alas! could there be any thing seen amongst us, after the heavy stroak of the Plague was somewhat lightned, that deserved to be call'd a Reformation? How few were put

to

to a ſtand thereby, and brought to conſider and
their waies? Though they ſaw their neighbours
friends cut off before them, yet did they not ſtill
on in their former careleſs and prophane courſe?
conſiderable notice was there taken of the hand of G
Did not the moſt who out-liv'd the Plague, ſhew
their ſins out-liv'd it too? did they not fall in
with the very ſame violence and unconſcionable
neſs they were wont, to the purſuing of their
deſigns? As if their greateſt trouble was, that they
been ſo long interrupted in their gainful trading:
well if the trade of ſinning was even that while inter-
ted. Or if there were ſome, who by the apprehenſion
approaching death, were frighted out of ſome gro
ſins, and into good purpoſes; yet did they not ſoo
turn to their old bent, like ſtreams, whoſe courſe
been for a while damm'd up? Many, it is to be fea
Who in their trouble ſought God, preſently forgat
when that was removed; and forgot the promiſes
made to him, of newneſs of life and better obedie
in caſe they ſhould be recovered and preſerved. Bu
cauſe generals affect not ſo much; let me put it to th
Conſcience, Reader, for thy particular, what influ
the late Viſitation had upon thee, for the changing
bettering thy heart and life? Did it bring thee to re
upon thy ſelf, and ſearch out what was the plague o
heart? what luſt thou hadſt harboured? what duty
hadſt neglected? whereby thou hadſt contributed to
increaſing and haſtning of Gods indignation. And
thou thereupon proceed to the humbling of thy ſoul
fore God for thy tranſgreſſion, and to the reformi
thy life? If indeed thou haſt done thus, and ſhalt
on ſo doing, its happy for thee: but examine well
ther thou art not ſtill the ſame man that ever thou
as proud and worldly, as ſlothful and ſenſual as e

and as much a ſtranger to God, and Chriſt, and heavenly things as ever. Whether it be thus with *thee* or not, I cannot ſay, I leave that to God and thy own Conſcience to judge: But I think without breach of charity, I may ſay, 'tis thus with the moſt. The Rod hath left them as bad as it found them, and therefore indeed worſe: Now do but conſider it impartially, whether this be not matter of high provocation to the Divine Majeſty, to ſee himſelf and his providences thus ſleighted by heedleſs reſolute ſinners. For ſure we muſt needs think that it is for ſome end, that he who is wiſe and good layes ſufferings upon a people; and he expects they ſhould improve them to this end; and takes exact notice whether they do ſo or not. No doubt therefore but he expected an improvement of our late heavy Viſitation, and did obſerve our behaviour in and after that time. He that looks down from his heavenly Throne upon all the dwellers on earth, hath beheld our ſenſleſneſs and ſtupidity, how light wee have made of the Tokens of his diſpleaſure, our hypocriſie and impudence, how we have kept our Faſts, and our Sins together; he hath ſeen how regardleſs we have been of the deſign of this Diſpenſation, as if it was no Call to the Inhabitants of the Land, to return to God from whom they had backſlidden, but rather that it came by chance, or however, was no more conſiderable than other Diſeaſes are; and accordingly we have been little more concerned, except in ſtudying how to keep our ſelves out of danger, little thinking of beraking our ſelves to God, to get our peace made with him, nor well conceiving of any great advantage to be had thereby. Is this indeed a true Character of our demeanour, and could we think the Great God would brook ſuch inſufferable contempt? When Fathers have taken the Rod in hand, do they uſe to lay it down before the Childes ſtubbornneſs be conquered? Often

may

may we finde in the ſtory of Princes, that they will rather connive at ſome affronts from their Subjects, or Neighbours, than attempt a redreſs or puniſhment which they fear themſelves unable to accompliſh; but if once this attempt be made, they look upon themſelves engaged in honour and policy to proſecute it, leaſt by the failour their weakneſs be diſcovered, their authority empair'd, and the offendors more confirmed in their inſolencies. How would *Pharoah* have triumphed, if after a judgement or two, *Moſes* had ceaſt his ſuit, and let the *Iſraelites* in his hand: he would even have taken himſelf too hard for that God who demanded them thence. If then the Almighty hath purpoſt to reform this Nation or root it up, do we think he will give us off before this purpoſe be accompliſht? As he hath before given precept upon precept, and with great patience waited for the fruit thereof, ſo he may now juſtly ſend Judgement after Judgement, and if one bee ſlighted, follow it with another, till his ends are brought to paſs. This is no more than what he hath often threatned to the Obſtinate. *Leviticus* 26. *Jer.* 30. 23, 24. *Behold the whirlewind of the Lord goeth forth with fury, a continuing whirlewind, it ſhall fall with pain upon the head of the wicked. The fierce anger of the Lord ſhall not return until hee hath done it, and till hee hath performed the intents of his heart, in the latter daies ye ſhall conſider it.*

But before I conclude the diſcovery of the probable cauſes of this our late ſuffering, I cannot but point at the continuance of that miſcarriage which I formerly mentioned, and manifeſted to have ſo great an influence in procuring our miſeries, namely, *The diſabling and reſtraining ſo many faithful Miniſters of Chriſt from doing what they might, toward the preventing and leſſening of provoking Sins, and the advancement of that Godlineſs which is the welfare and eſtabliſhment of a Kingdome.* The

ground I go upon in asserting this to be a principal cause of our Calamities, are with mee unquestionable; and will be I think with any one else, who will first but grant, that the overflowing of wickedness brings ruine upon a Nation; and then will soberly consult his own reason, whether the restraint of many such who would make it their very business to oppose the growth and spreading of sin, is not the ready way to cause it overflow? and lastly, will but attend to his own experience, whether this hath not been (and is therefore like to bee still) the effect of the removal of the late Ministers from their employments, and of denying admission to all other, who cannot accept of the hard conditions which are tendred them. This, as I yet conceive, I have made beyond all contradiction evident in the former discourse, *pag.* 80. and forward. Nor can I devise what can bee alledg'd to weaken that evidence. Is it not most certain that there are many such mean places in the Countries, as are altogether destitute of Preachers, which they, who with all their Souls would accept them, are absolutely forbidden to supply? And is it not almost impossible but they should be ignorant, who have no Teacher, and ungodly, who are ignorant? Again, if there any thing of a slander in what I have there said, That there are many places furnisht only with men utterly insufficient and unfit for the Ministry, being either intollerably negligent or ignorant, or of loose and vicious Lives? To hear of this may bee unpleasant to those that cause it, but if it bee true, is it not likely to bee much more displeasing to God to behold it? Have there not been multitudes restor'd to the Ministry, who were once cast forth for the notorious scandalousnesse of their Conversation? And though they pretend, it's like, that Loyalty was their onely Crime, yet doth not the continuance of their loose-

nesse

ness, as much justifie their former ejection, as condemn their restitution? Amongst the many hundreds that have been excluded for Non-conformity, where are there ten, may I not say one, thus proceeded against for Prophaneness? 'Tis lawful I hope to mention these things which almost every body sees and talks of! Even those who are not at all desirous to spy blemishes in the Church of *England*, as they love to speak, nor any corruption in her Administrations; cannot but confess this to bee a most grievous one, loudly calling for a Reformation. And is it a fault to speak the sense of such who are freest from partiality and prejudice? If then so many Shepherds are set over the Flocks, who are either careless of them, or are themselves dangerously sick of those Diseases they ought to cure, what's like to become of the Sheep? and what's the ground of all this mischief, but the seclusion of so many Pious and Conscientious men from the Ministry, which hath made a kinde of necessity of admitting such unfit persons thereinto to supply their rooms, or of leaving such vacancies as might too much shame the Authors. This, am confident, is the chief ground, together with the zeal in those who preside over these affairs for the strengthning of their own cause, which makes them dispense very much to such as are qualified with a full Conformity, which is seldome wanting in them who have little else to recommend them. Now what course could bee taken that was like to do more to the encrease of wickedness than this, namely, to thrust into corners such who improv'd their utmost abilities to counter-work, and instead of them, to admit such into the Pulpit, who practises at least were Patrons and Promoters of it? Let me not be thought guilty of so much immodesty or prejudice, as to say they are all such, I have before prevented that mistake; but I think he may justly be arg

both, who denies that there are any such. But suppose there were not (which with all my Soul I wish was more than a supposition) yet I am still of opinion, that the silencing of so many Ministers, at least as eminent for piety, Learning, and Diligence in their employments, as those who succeed them; and preventing so many others, hath been as great a check and hindrance to true Religion and Godliness, and of as fatal consequence to the souls of thousands, as any thing that ever befell us since the Reformation. Could there bee a readier way to expose men to death, than in time of some great mortality, in a City where the one half of the Physicians are *Galenists*, the other *Chimists*, to issue out an order, that none should practise except they who would approve the method of *Gallen*; or the contrary: whereby the half must needs be rendred useless, in a season where there would be work for all, though a thousand more? And was it less dangerous to the Souls of men to have so many Physicians removed, when neither the Patients nor their Diseases were few or inconsiderable? It was not then I hope either for want of consideration or charity, that I before took the boldness to suggest, that the deformation of this disorder, was one lesson, which the God then laid on us, ought to teach us.

And since that time hath the case been altered, have matters been mended amongst us? Need I tell the World that they have not? Is there any man such a stranger in *England*, that he knows not what hath been done since then? How new ambiguous Oaths, as likely to be refused as the former, have been fram'd and impos'd, so that they who were before cast forth of their employments, and stript of their maintenance depending thereupon, must now be driven from Cities, Towns Corporate, and the places where they have been formerly employ'd, except they would embrace these. And yet

what

what new crimes, to deserve such punishments, t
were guilty of, we are yet to learn, except this was
That, through the providence of God, and the charit
his people, they were not starv'd to death, or in
compliance something worse. I am almost afraid
being offensive, whil'st I do but nakedly relate this i
ruple dealing with such, for many of whom I dare con
dently say, their Innocence is as great as their Suffe
ings; the very rehearsal thereof seems so strange, esp
cially if we consider that doleful circumstance of t
wherein it was set on foot. Whil'st we were all smar
ing, amongst other sins, for our unchristian divisions
even then instead of healing our Breaches, and the La
at once, were some preparing lashes for their Breth
who should survive; that if they were left on earth, th
might not have a comfortable and quiet habitation
it, so far as they could hinder it. Did they, whom w
may reasonably suppose the chief promoters of this d
sign, imagine, that they had offended by too great g
dleness, and therefore must expiate that fault by t
severity? Alas, they need not have fear'd it! Or
they indeed take these their Brethren to be the Pe
and Plague-sores of the Nation, by purging of wh
from Towns and Cities, they thought to atone Heav
and purge the Land? They should not methinks h
uncharitable. But yet wee finde the best of men h
been as heavily censured. The Apostles themsel
were taken to be the περικαθάρματα τȣ̃ κόσμȣ, 1 Cor.
13. such kinde of vile persons as were commonly pit
upon for the lustration of their Cities, in times of gr
Calamity, And as their censure, so their condi
was not much unlike; for wee finde, v. 11. *They ha
certain dwelling place.*

May we not by the way, lawfully take notice of t
mercifulness and wisdome of that Providence, wh
cum

urn'd what was meant for his servants harm; into their good, even their temporal good; by something an harsh, but it seems a friendly voice, calling to them to go to *Pella* before *Jerusalem* was destroy'd. It might seem a peice of violence which the Angels offered to lingring *Lot*, when they laid hands on him to bring him away, *Gen.*19.16. But if he had at first thought so, it was but very little while before he had sufficient ground to acknowledge, what we read in the same verse, *That the Lord being merciful to him, brought him forth, and set him without the City.* Who would not in such a dark and mutable world as this, give up himself without repining to the conduct of that Providence, which intends our good by those very waies which seems most to contradict it, and which will safely lead us through all the various gloomy turns of Life, and at length accomplish the best desires of all those who sincerely serve, and intirely resign up themselves to it. When as they who are engag'd in any work, which is contrary to his Will who rules the World, will finde themselves baffled and overcome even when they think they succeed and prevail. Oh how miserably do we often find the Wise men of the World infatuated in their policies, whil'st they pull down the Walls to secure the City. When the *Pharisees* conceiv'd or pretended a fear, that if Christ should bee let alone and gather so many followers after him, the *Romans* (as imagining, it's like, that they design'd a rebellion) would come upon them and take away their Nation; the course they took to prevent this danger, by conspiring against the life of our blessed Lord, provid a means of bringing upon them those *Romans* which they fear'd, and by them destruction to their City and Nation. The *Sodomites*, to whom the precise life and galling reproofs of *Lot* were as much a vexation, as their wickedness was to his righteous Soul, who were

extremely impatient that an Upstart and Stranger sho
take so much upon him, far'd never the better for hav
this thorn pluckt out of their side; and had at le
reason to be convinc't, that not his Neighbourhood,
their contempt of it, with their other impieties, w
most prejudicial to them. *Never yet did Town or C*
fare worse for an holy praying people: Swearing, and C
sing, and Conventicles of Good-fellowship, and P
phaneness, are like enough to bring mischief upon
places where they are practis'd, but humble serv
prayer, be it in publick, or in private, in a *Synagogue*,
in an *Upper Room*, never did nor will do; but rather
restraining of prayer before God may probably do it.
Aaron and *Hur* should have laid stones upon *Mose*
hands, to weigh them down, instead of supporting the
no wonder if the hands of their Warriours had be
weakned, and *Amalek* had prevailed: Or if, when
stood in the Gap to intercede for the *Israelites*, th
should have pluckt him out of it, no wonder if w
had soon overwhelm'd them. Had they gone abou
prohibit, or any way restrain the offering up the Ince
of prayer to God, it had been but just and natural
he should have made the smoke of his fury and their
ments to ascend.

Need I mention it to any knowing Englishman w
a kind of Mourning Garb our Nation hath lately w
and in what a disconsolate posture she hath sate?
Nation so gladded by the Restauration of her Righ
Magistrate, our dread Soveraign, and equally sadne
the removal of a faithful Ministry; than which sca
any thing could have been devis'd more to the grie
and even breaking the hearts of such, to whom the
terests of their souls are dearer than all worldly thi
And such, though they may not be the richest nor
greatest, yet without question they are the best pa

ny Kingdome where they dwell. But yet I must confess, have met with very few comparatively, of what spirit r inclination soever, that have seem'd pleas'd with these ansactions, but acknowledge that gentleness and bro-erly forbearance had been more suitable to the nature f that Christian Profession which we all own, and more dvantageous to its interest, which we all pretend to de-gn. Undoubtedly then the blessed God, who hath a uicker and more tender sense of his own glory and the oncerns of his servants, than the most holy and com-assionate man on earth can have, is not well pleas'd to ehold the violence and harshness with which they are ollow'd, though it may be under pretence of *doing him ervice*. Though they that hate their Brethren, and *cast em forth, may say, Let the Lord be glorified*, yet they hall be nevertheless ashamed of this hatred, this expres-on of it, and the pretences wherewith they varnish it, hen the Lord himself shall appear for the vindication nd joy of those who for his Names sake were contemn-d and abused. And although that great day of discover-g truth and doing Justice be yet to come, when all Vi-ors shall be pluckt off from persons and things, such that ow render Vices Honourable, and Virtues Criminous, s the prosperous please to vote them, and when all be-g manifested to be what they are, shall be treated as hey deserve; yet even before that day, there are now many times such strokes in that Providence which orders umane affairs, as to a careful beholder may somewhat iscover what those rules are by which God is pleased or-inarily to proceed in his Administrations. And such Es-ayes and expressions of Justice there are mingled with Mercy, as may serve to bring the ignorant and secure to onsider their wayes, and to reclaim the considerate. And have not Gods Dispensations towards us been such s speak him to have a Controversie with us? Have we

not found that it is an easier thing to silence his Mi-
sters than his Judgements? Every mans own sense
best able to inform him what our flourishing and pros-
rity hath been since that time. Scarce a sensible Chris-
an but to his grief observes how lamentably the inter-
of Religion hath declined, and scarce any carnal man
sensless but complains that our worldly prosperity ha
done so. Certainly that all-seeing God, who is a lov
of Holiness, will not be mockt with appearances a
glorious pretences. 'Tis not the flourishes of Order, D
cency and Uniformity, that will be accepted instead
down-right Godliness, and true Charity and Unity. T
reform a Church, and raise it out of its ruines, impl
something more than either to repair and beautifie stra
ly Edifices, though Consecrated ones; or to give a litt
splendor to external service, and seduce some petty c
cumstances of worship which had been disus'd: 'Tis
much sense to say, that he recover'd a man to life, w
instead of a plain Coat put him on a gaudy one, whic
perhaps may not be so serviceable neither. Nor is th
welfare and glory of a Church to be measured by th
wealth, pomp and power of its Governours (for the
we know who would carry it from all Competitors) n
by its attainment of those ends for which it was inst
ted: We use not to count that the best Flock which
diseas'd and scabbed, though the Shepherds may be ric
and at ease; nor is that Hospital in the best order, whe
Governours and Physitians have the greatest Reven
and liberty to do what they list, whilst the sick a
wounded are neglected, and perish, but that where
these are most carefully lookt to, and best healed: A
that's the best School where the Masters are most a
and painful, and the Scholars make the best progres
earning and good manners, not that where the Mas
re best paid, and do least, though such as these are t
lis

likelieſt to get their ſilly Scholars love. Plainly then, the bleſſed Redeemer of Mankind, the Founder and Law-giver of the Chriſtian Church, hath appointed it to be as a School, wherein Believers by the teachings of his Spirit, Word and Miniſters, are to be trained up into a fitneſs for the high and heavenly glory; as an Hoſpital wherein lapſt ſouls are to be heal'd of the diſeaſes contracted by the fall, that they may be made meet for the preſent ſervice and future enjoyment of God: wherefore we muſt needs conclude, that's the happieſt and moſt glorious Church, where theſe deſigns are moſt faithfully regarded and ſucceſsfully carried on, even where ſin and wickedneſs is moſt vigorouſly ſet againſt, diſcouraged and ſuppreſt, and all real goodneſs is moſt promoted and farthest ſpread; where the ſeveral members are diligently inſtructed, and carefully lookt after, ſo that they grow in ſound knowledge, faith, humility, zeal, and every other grace, and live together in mutual peace, love and righteouſneſs, adorning the Goſpel, and glorifying their heavenly Father by ſuch fruitful, beautiful converſations. But where-ever theſe things are leſs regarded, let there be never ſo much empty noiſe of Order and Settlement upon ſure and ancient foundations, of a flouriſhing Clergy, and excellent Conſtitutions, becauſe perhaps they all read over the ſame prayer, or wear their Coats all of a colour; yet whilſt I believe the Goſpel, which tells us the nature and ends of this holy Society, I ſhall never believe that to be the beſt ordered Church which falls ſo vaſtly ſhort thereof, even that where the Life and Power of Religion apparently decayes, and ignorance, lukewarmneſs, and prophaneneſs live, thrive, and over-run the members. I think its far better to ſee the Phyſicians in times of great ſickneſs buſily running to reſcue the diſeaſed from the jaws of death, though perhaps not with ſo much formality and orderlineſs as

might at another time seem requisite, than to have the take state upon them, and busie themselves in devis and prescribing Orders about their Administrations th make more for their own interest, or at least for the h mor of some of them, than for the good of their P tients; especially if they should proceed to make it Crime for those that may be as skilful and faithful themselves, to endeavour the saving of their Neighbo lives, except in every punctilio they comply with the humors. But to do thus in matters that concern the eve lasting life and death of immortal souls, is such a pie of bold selfishness and uncharitableness, as will scar be well taken by him who died for them. And whet there have not been such limitations and restraints la upon many whose business and office it was to overl souls, and thereby such injury done to their precio charge, let any unbyast Reader, who knows how affa stand amongst us, determine; as also, if it be so, whe ther such actions must not needs tend much to the pro vocation and dishonor of God, being publickly owned a justified, and the whole Nation involved in the Guilt, i far as it can concur to a single action; and whet therefore the redress of this may not reasonably b thought one grand Admonition of the several calamit which have of late like waves com'n riding one upon t neck of another.

And now at length, what as to this particular shall b the fruit of these flames that have burnt up the Glor our Land? Shall they not burn up the dishonour of too? Shall not our animosities and contentions, a earthly carnal zeal which hath fed upon our spirits, a almost consumed our vitals, with all our passionate flammations and heart-burnings, be thrown into this f never to revive and live more? Oh would to God t they might, I should not then stick to call it a Bles

F

Fire, which ſhould conſume and carry away ſo much of a worſe, even of Hell it ſelf, from amongſt us. Oh happy were we, if our Droſs and Tin were but thus burnt off, that we might come out of the fire ſo well refin'd! That all our ſtubborn Spirits were but melted and ſoftned into ſuch mutual compliances as beſeems Chriſtian Brethren. But alas! what mortal power can produce ſuch bleſſed effects? What earthly inſtrument can bring about ſuch an heavenly work? No, this is left for Omnipotence to accompliſh. *Good Lord, then let the power of thy Grace ſet in with thy Providences, and let thy Spirit do that, which neither Plague, Fire nor Sword, Mercies nor any Means by themſelves can: Even to work the Spirits of all thoſe who call themſelves thy Servants and Children, into a gentle, loving temper, becoming that Profeſſion and the nearneſs of their Relation; that they may with faithfulneſs and reſolution, joyn hands in that work, to which they are all engag'd, and give each other what aſſiſtance and encouragement they are able, for the ſubverſion of Satans Kingdome, and the carrying on thoſe deſigns of mercy to Mankinde, for which thou didſt create, and doſt uphold this world, and ſent'ſt thy Son into it, and keep'ſt thy Goſpel and Miniſters in it.*

Is there any thing in this requeſt, to which all true Chriſtians may not readily give their *Amen?* Why then ſhould not all who own that Name, contribute their endeavours to the obtaining of that, which they profeſs to deſire? How lamentable and ſtrange a thing is this, that when wee are all agreed, or ſeem to bee ſo, about the chief end which we ought to purſue, and the principal means conducing thereto, that yet we ſhould ſtand at ſo hot and hurtful a difference about matters, wherein one would think it impoſſible for rational Men to differ. Are wee not all agreed, that the honour of God, and ſalvation of Souls, ought to bee the principal end of our endeavours? And that the bringing of men to

know, believe, and obey the Goſpel, is the only w
for the attaining of this end? And that the delivering
explaining, and inculcating upon them, the truths a
duties of this Goſpel, by a Miniſtry fitted for th
work, is the ordinary means for the begetting of Fa
and Obedience? And after all this, ſhall it bee
controverſie, whether many of thoſe who are th
fitted, and acknowledged to bee ſo, ſhall bee kep
off from this, ſo needful, ſo important a work, rathe
than to bee diſpenſt with, as to ſome ſuch Subſcription
and practices, which they that refuſe, dare not compl
with, for fear of ſinning; and which they that impoſe,
know they may lawfully diſpenſe with, being matter
of that nature, that the moſt zealous Aſſertors of them
will not affirm they are of abſolute neceſſity, nor tha
they will countervail the loſs of Souls, which, it's to
too evident, the rigid impoſition of them does an
will occaſion. Will nothing that hath yet befaln us
help to cle r our Judgements and ſettle our affections,
ſo far as to end this controverſie? Are not our ſuffering
yet great enough to meeken and bow our ſpirits, an
drive us together? Shall they not now at laſt, worke
ſame happy effect upon us, in reference to theſe diffe
rences, that Perſecution and Impriſonment did upo
thoſe famous Martyrs, *Ridley* and *Hooper*, in a buſineſs o
the like nature. The good man, who was before ſo bu
in preſſings Conformity, ſoon put off his harſhneſs,
as appear'd by his loving Letter, when he ſaw his Broth
a Priſoner for the ſame common truth with himſelf.
They who may quarrel in the Palace, are made friend
in a Priſon, and embrace each other at a Stake. An
they who cannot agree, ſo much as about wearing th
ſame clothes, are ſoon reconcil'd when they wear th
ſame chain. And ſhould we be reduc't to the like ca
with them, I am very apt to believe we ſhould then b

of the ſame relenting temper. They who have been guilty of ſo much rigour, would then, I hope, be aſham'd and griev'd to remember how they had formerly made thoſe to ſuffer, who are now become their Brethren in ſuffering. May we not ſay, Oh wholſome Perſecution, whoſe fetters oft prove *lords of peace*, whoſe preſſures allay that pride, and heal thoſe breaches, that would not by any other means be healed? But what ſhall neither Reaſon, Intereſt nor Conſcience perſwade that, which a more ſmarting Rod would whip us to? Will nothing but ravenous Wolves drive Chriſts Flock together? Will no other Fire but that of Martyrdome, devour our unnatural hearts? Oh why ſhould we provoke God to uſe harſher means for the accompliſhment of that, which hee ſees his more favourable diſpenſations will not produce?

That it is nothing ſinful or unreaſonable that is requeſted, I appeal to the *Petition for Peace*, to which I before refer'd, as containing the ſum of their deſires, whoſe cauſe I plead. Will it be a ſin to grant that Indulgence, which for ſome time his Majeſty by his Declaration did; and which hee was pleaſed alſo to give aſſurance, hee ſhould conſent to have it by Act of Parliament confirm'd, when any Bill to that purpoſe ſhould be propos'd; and which moreover, it was publickly reported, he was graciouſly inclin'd ſince to have given, had not they, whom leaſt beſeem'd to be enemies of tenderneſs and charity, prevented it. In a word, can any thing bee more reaſonable, than that they who profeſs themſelves Officers in the Church of Chriſt, to govern it according to his Orders, and to carry on his Ends, ſhould ſo far provide for his honour, and the neceſſities of Souls, as to give way to ſuch to Preach his Goſpel, who are competently qualified for, and earneſtly deſirous of that Employment; and that upon ſuch conditions as Chriſt hath in his Laws appointed,

pointed, and the Apostles in their times required those whom they admitted to this Function? Let that are Lovers of truth and peace, determine whether be not a modest and just proposal; and whether it not be something else than Conscience and a Zeal for R ligion, that can cause any to reject it; this God will his time determine. I mention Church-Officers, cause, by their mediation, this Liberty is most likely be obtained, as by their interposure, principally it h been taken away and hindred: which consideration, side the nature of their Office and Trust, meth should engage them to do what they may towards it's covery.

And was there now but this much granted, thoug dare not say it would bring us all that outward prospe which is desired, yet I am confident, it would very m change this sad face of things that now appears among and would revive a languishing spiritless Nation, and re much expel those ominous fears, and mis-giving minde, wherewith we are so generally seiz'd; For I wel assur'd it would rejoyce the hearts of thousands of Majesties most faithful Subjects, who though they sho be *fed with the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction* yet would more chearfully bear it, were *their Teachers remov'd out of the corners*, whereinto they have been ven, so that they might freely see and hear them. And may reasonably suppose, that an action which tend much to the honour and service of Religion, even to curing of our divisions, the easing of the burdened, not only to the pleasing of sober and good people, but the profiting of the bad, will be very acceptable to Go and the most likely way to procure that favour, wh will secure a Person or Kingdome from being miser whatever befall them.

And what is it, can we imagine, that should pre

that *Grant*, which is in ſelf ſo highly reaſonable, and attended with ſo many deſirable conſequences? I know not what can bee objected, but that common pretence, *That this is the way to caſt us all into confuſions and diſorders*: To which I have before ſufficiently anſwered. Why, I beſeech you, ſhould acts of Clemency breed Confuſion, where thoſe of rigour have been receiv'd with patience? Why ſhould they be thought ſo fooliſh and diſingenuous, as to become diſorderly by the favour of their ſuperiours, who have had ſo much Conſcience, as to be peaceable in the want of it? Eſpecially ſince this favour is of that nature, that it makes them little more capable of doing miſchief, if they were inclined to it, but might do much to prevent or take away ſuch inclinations, if there was any danger. And how can that breed Confuſion, which will do ſo much to the ſatisfying of mindes, the uniting of hearts, and ſo to the ſtrengthening of our hands. But to ſecure all, what can be deſired more than is before intimated? *viz.* That they who ſhare in this Liberty, binde themſelves by the moſt plain and ſacred Oaths, not to endeavour the diſturbance of either Church or State, but the peace of both. And if any bee indeed found guilty of acting to the contrary, let them bear the puniſhments due to Sedition and Perjury.

Fain now would I hope that there are none ſo fully bent on their own Wills, that they are abſolutely reſolv'd, no offered Reaſons nor Entreaties ſhall prevail with them, to depart an inch from their undertaken courſe. Let us leave that as a property of the moſt ſingular Church, amongſt the many other Prerogatives which makes her ſtand by her ſelf, to juſtifie and maintain all her Errours, leaſt ſhe ſhould be thought once to have err'd; Proclaiming her Obſtinacy, inſtead of diſproving her Fallibility. But they who make none of

that

that ridiculous and proud claim, may well enough av
those intanglements, which are the pernicious but n
cessary consequences thereof. As the frailty of M
exposes him to mistakes, so 'tis the honour of a Chris
an to acknowledge and retract them. Nor will an
hope, conceit themselves pen't up in such unhapp
circumstances, that they have occasion to complain,
Adrian the sixth did, *That being Pope, he could do l*
good though he really desired it, because he could attemp
considerable piece of Reformation, but he found it would
ther disoblige the Grandees of his own Court, empair his r
venue, or some way or other weaken the Papal interest.
that I am pleading for, is but a Liberty for able, godly
peaceable men, to Preach the plain and pure Gospel
Christ, which it is his command should be made know
to every Creature: And wherein this can prejudice a
person or party, that maintain not designs contrary to
or advance't above this Gospel, I am utterly to seek.
there be any whose endeavours shall bee found more
the upholding and propagating of a Faction, than
Godliness; I am far from wishing them any such favou
as might capacitate them the more successfully to serv
themselves. But yet since unhappily there are so ma
petty differences, and notes of distinction amongst us, le
every man have so much Justice, as not to be presen
condemn'd as Factious, because he is angerly call'd
by another, from whom in some small things hee m
dissent: For if such censures may bee on all hands a
mitted as current proofs, I fear wee shall finde few i
nocent through the whole Land. Of contrary opinio
its impossible to hold both, and in matters of practi
which are under debate, wee must either do them
leave them undone. And thus we cannot avoid the a
pearance of being on one side, which, be it what it wi
the contrary part (the most rigid of them at least) will

apt to stile it a Sect, and those Sectaries which adhere to it, because not thorowly siding with them: And how the most Catholick-spirited Christian can well please both, is not easie to conceive, displease them hee may far easier. It is not my business now to enquire into the nature of those things wherein we differ, so to attempt a dicision, who is in the right, and who is in the wrong; and thence to infer the equitableness of Liberty to any sort of men, upon supposition of their being in the right: But it is enough for my design to suppose (what methinks should not, by any that are sober and charitable, be den'ed me, to wit.)

(1) That at present the conditions of access to the Ministry, are of that nature, that it's possible for good Men Conscientiously to dissent from them; And

(2) That there may lawfully bee such abatements made as these Dissenters will comply with.

(3) That notwithstanding the differences that may after this remain in opinion, wee may live together in love, and joyntly promote the Great ends of the Gospel: From which premises, I presume it is a very fair and natural inference, That such who will sincerely apply themselves to the advancing of these Ends, and will engage not to break the Peace about any inferiour points wherein they differ, ought not to bee look't upon as Factious and Schismatical; nor as such to bee hindred from imploying themselves to the best advantage, for the honour of their Lord, and the benefit of his People. Let him then onely bee accounted Schismatically inclin'd, who, for the propagating of his own by-opinions, and the advancement of his Party, will neglect and contradict the weightier duties of Religion; not looking so much to the saving of souls, as getting himself Proselites;

un-

undervaluing, cenſuring, and abuſing all that are not
his own way; for ſuch as theſe, be they who they will
and let them pretend what they will: I open not my
mouth in their vindication, but will rather heartily joyn
with our *Letany*, in praying that from all ſuch *Schiſme* in
Opinion, affection or practiſe, the *Lord would deliver us*
and from thoſe who are incurably tainted therewith, the
Good Lord deliver both this and all other Churches
through the Chriſtian World.

If it ſhould be demanded by what farther note we ſhall
know the Factious from thoſe that are not ſo, ſince fine
words and fair pretences are a very fallible and inſuffici-
ent Criterion? To ſuch I anſwer, That Juſtice and
Common Reaſon will tell us, that the profeſſions, pro-
miſes and oaths of men, muſt be taken for the ſureſt
diſcovery of their hearts and intentions, till they ſhall
have utterly forfeited their credit; and when it ſhall be
evident, not by general charges of whole parties, but
by particuler proof, that any have done ſo, let them ne-
ver more be truſted, till their Penitence and Reforma-
on may have redeem'd that forfeiture; yet let not the
Innocent ſuffer for their ſakes, nor let them be thought
agree with them in all their miſcarriages, who may agree
with them in a particular Opinion, which is the moſt
uncharitable cenſure that can be, except it may be
prov'd that thoſe *miſcarriages* are inſeparable from the
Opinion. If any man ſhould attempt to murder the
Pope, upon pretence that he is not Head of the Church
the Guilt of his Fact is not chargeable upon all that are
of the ſame Opinion, ſince this attempt was not the ne-
ceſſary conſequence of that Opinion, but of the wea-
neſs of his diſcourſe, or ſome carnal Motive: Why
ſhould the peaceable bear the blame of other mens di-
orders, which they could not help, nor did contribute to

But if there ſhould be any, who whilſt they zealou-
inve-

veigh against all parties, shall yet be found so sollici-
ous for their own, that they will admit of nothing as a
est of peaceableness and Piety, but the profession of
ompliance with them, even in those things which are
he grounds of difference: I fear this their course will
e so far from being serviceable to the recovery of the
hurches Peace, that it will prove one of the greatest
structions of it that could be thought of. And if such
hall be jealous of all that refuse the conditions they of-
r them, as if they went about to set up for themselves,
d will accept of no protestations to the contrary, but
ill endeavour as far as they well can, to keep them out
f a capacity of doing God service, least they should
ndermine some interest of theirs, they do too plainly
ell the world, that they have got something which they
alue at an higher rate than the propagating of the Go-
pel, and saving mens souls; since by their good will
othing shall be done in this work, but by those who will
arry on those other ends of theirs. This is such a De-
onstration, as meer pretences to the contrary are too
eak to confute: But happy will it prove for us all, if
nce we become so wise as to believe, that there is no
reater nor truer self-interest, than to be faithful to the
ause of our Common Lord, and diligent in his ser-
ice, according to our several capacities: So that all
ey who own themselves in Commission under him,
ay desire and imploy their power to no other end than
o procure obedience to his Laws, for which purpose a-
one his Servants are Authorized, as the King Deputes
fficers to see his Laws executed. This is their Office
nd their Honor, to be the happy Instruments of bringing
any souls to know and accept of Jesus Christ as their
ord and Saviour; as it is the business and the honor of
n Embassador to accomplish those designs of his Prince
or which he received his Commission and instructions,

whereas

whereas to neglect these for some private ends of
own, would speak him rather a Factor for himself, th
a Minister of his Prince. And when Christs Minist
do heartily believe this, they will never have a jealou
of knowledge and godliness (by whomsoever they
furthered and spread) as if they could receive prej
dice thereby, since then it will be their only desire a
greatest delight that these may thrive, and they w
will joyn their industry with them in this blessed wo
cannot but be dear to them, notwithstanding any les
differences betwixt them. Holy *Paul* rejoyc'd in th
Christ was preacht, even when it was done by some
of no good principle; and why was this, but because
that he propos'd to himself was that Christ might
preacht. It was not his Reputation in the World, n
any advancement that he sought for, but that the Kin
dome of his Master might be enlarged, and so this w
forward nothing could displease or hurt him. Oh how
then may we imagine that he was from forbidding
that nam'd themselves Followers of *Cephas* or *Apoll*
opposition to him, to preach this Gospel. Happy th
shall we be, if this true Christian spirit of meekne
self-denial, and untainted zeal for Gods honour, ob
and prevail amongst us: But if Religion be made an inst
ment of State, or a means for the attaining of some
nal ends, and the Church be governed by such Quirk
Policy as Statesmen use in Civil Administrations, th
indeed its likely that what, according to the plain Ru
of the Gospel, would be very serviceable, shall yet
rejected, because it agrees not with Politicks. A
sometimes even ignorance and ungodliness shall rat
be suffered to grow and encrease, than those means p
mitted for their extirpation which have not a tende
to such private ends, or suit not with the Methods w
men too profoundly wise have propos'd to themselv

I pray God preserve all amongst us from being guilty of so much selfishness, so little true policy. And to draw to an end, I must profess I cannot see how they can absolve themselves of this guilt, who being entrusted with the management of Church affairs, shall not improve their power to redress this grievance whereof I have been complaining, and to obtain that just liberty for the Ministers of Christ, for which I have been petitioning; which its probable might be attain'd with ease, were they but barely willing that it should be granted.

But if they prove deaf to all the most humble and importunate entreaties, and continue the restraint of those who are conscious to themselves of no other designs (in the main) but such as Christ and his Apostles had when they were upon earth, even to instruct and convert careless sinners, and build up believers; still procuring sufferings to such, who by their good will would displease no man, if it be possible to please God and them too, (and some such there are) I shall then look upon these strange proceedings as boding yet more and greater mischief to this torn and bleeding Nation: Will God have mercy upon that people who will shew no more mercy to one another? From the day of our Peace-making and hearty Reconciliation, if ever such desired day shall come, I shall reckon the beginning of *Englands* Restauration to her happiness and glory; but before then I shall have little hopes of either. I am not so vain as to make pretence to any Prophetick Spirit; but when I consider the reason of the thing, the Nature of God manifested in his Word, and the course of his Providence, I can hardly think that Nation will be very prosperous, which shall do so much to dis-ingage themselves from his favour, by discouraging so many whom he hath fitted for, and sent out into his service; giving such a stop to the course of his Gospel, whereby

the Inhabitants ſhould be brought to that obedience his Commands, which hath the bleſſings of this and that to come, entail'd upon it. Moreover, evident to any conſiderative beholder, that Popery, phaneneſs, and Infidelity, are combin'd againſt us; chiefs near akin, and being united under one Com Head, go about ſeeking whom they may devoure: inſtead of joyning ſtrength againſt them, we conti thoſe diviſions which weaken it, reaſon and experi will tell us, we ſhall hereby lie much more open their fury. And to little purpoſe will it be for mea declaim earneſtly againſt theſe growing evils, w they nouriſh the certain cauſes of them; and to p tend themſelves deſirous to have contentions ceaſe, wickedneſs reform'd from amongſt us, whilſt they induſtriouſly keep off the moſt effectual means for ſu Concord and Reformation. And if they perſiſt in t reſolutions, how little reaſon have we to expect t our faſting and praying ſhould prevail for mercy, ex in order thereto, God ſhall be ſo far entreated by as to abate that obſtinacy, and remove that Veil of p tiality and ſelf-love which prevent it, where-ever t are to be found upon us. He himſelf aſſures us, *Iſa.* that it is not the formality of Sackcloth and Aſhes, hanging down the head like a Bull-ruſh, that will be cepted of thoſe who continue to *find their pleaſures, exact their labours*; or (as the Margent hath it) t things wherewith they grieve others. But the *Faſt he hath choſen is, to looſe the Bands of wickedneſs, to und heavy burdens, to let the oppreſſed go free, and to break ry yoke, ver.* 6. To the ſame purpoſe he ſpeaks, *Zech.* when they enquired concerning their Faſts, whether ſhould ſtill keep them or not; his anſwer was, *Thou had not faſted to him that while; but rather they ſhould hearkned to the former Prophets, which cryed to them*

Jer

rusalem was inhabited, and in prosperity; and should have executed true Judgement, and shewn mercy and compassion every man to his Brother, and not have been guilty of oppression, nor of imagining evil in their hearts against their brother. And when, upon *Jonah*'s preaching, the *Ninevites* got such a very strict and solemn Fast, which being joyned with Reformation, was doubtless acceptable to God; yet its observeable how he seems not to take notice of this in comparison of their turning from sin, *Jon.* 3. 10. *And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way, and God repented of the evil that he had said that he would do unto them, and he did it not.*

And when at length we shall be perswaded to celebrate such a Fast as is before described, we may then enter hope for those blessed fruits of the same, which are promised in the 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12. verses of that 58. of *Isaiah*; the last whereof is so exceeding seasonable, both in the literal and spiritual sense, to our present sad condition; viz. *That they should build the old waste places, and raise up the foundations of many generations, and should be call'd the Repairer of the Breach, the Restorer of paths to dwell in.* And I pray God grant that the pious and successful endeavours of those who are in a capacity amongst us, may procure them these truly Honourable titles.

After all that I have said, I know 'tis easie for those who conceive themselves accused, to wipe off all by asserting, That 'tis not any severity of theirs which gives just ground of complaint, but rather the complainers may thank their own stubbornness and self-will for whatever smart they feel; and that they themselves are guilty of whatever mischiefs have com'n by their Deprivation, who would rather forsake their imployments than their humours. But to this, I conceive, I have said enough for the satisfaction of those who are willing to take any. And

if I had said no more than this (which is all I shall s
it might seem sufficient, to wit, that I have been ple
ing only for their liberty who are willing to take
most solemn oath, lawfully tendred them, that
a fear of displeasing God, and damning their souls, w
hinders their continuance in, or entrance upon the M
stry, on the conditions now required; and more
will as strictly binde themselves, if more favour
terms may be allowed them, not to abuse this favour,
the fomenting either of Sedition or Schisme; but
faithfully devote themselves to that work which is ca
fides acknowledged to be their duty, and will study
preserve and promote the peace and prosperity bot
Church and State. I leave it then to the judgemen
any charitable man, whether such as these are to be c
demn'd of obstinacy; and where the guilt is like to
if upon this pretence, their requested freedome of s
ving God in his Church shall still be denied them. A
moreover, I could wish (as I have said formerly) that
who oppose their Brethren in this request, would pu
to their own consciences, whether they durst make
same solemn professions, that they thus deal with th
for fear of displeasing God, and wounding their Cons
ences?

I may perhaps be thought guilty of very great fro
ness and petulancy for speaking at this rate; and (wou
you believe it?) even of Faction and Sedition, for
guing too plainly for peace and equity: but for that
am at a pass; for be it known to thee, Reader, I con
der who is present with me whilst I am writing, and b
fore whom I must shortly give account of these
all other my words; according to which Christ tells
we must either be justified or condemned; and even th
consideration prompts me to write what I do; so that
is not the fear of displeasing men which can deter
sin

om it; since also I can chearfully fore-think of that
e wherein this very controversie shall be equally and
ly decided, at the Bar of an Omniscient Holy God.
Wherefore to this God, I absolutely refer my endea-
ours, and the cause on whose behalf they are, as know-
g if it bee just and pious, it is his concern infinitely
ore than mans; and he will in his own time (which
e ought quietly to wait) so far own and advance it as
e sees best. Upon which supposition, I dare boldly
nclude, in the name of all those worthies, who are
onsciencciously engag'd in it, with that of the Prophet,
*he Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Law-giver, the Lord is
r King, he will save us.*'

And now methinks, the sad countenances of impover-
t Citizens, especially of sincere Christians, whom
losses can make poor, nor should make sad; call for
mething to be offered by way of consolation. But I
n for a while interrupted in this design by a far sadder
ht, even the merry looks of careless unreformed sin-
rs, who seem so little affected with present miseries,
apprehensive of any farther danger, as if they had no
elation to God, nor the rest of the world; as if they
re neither concern'd with his Providences, nor with
her mens Calamities: Men so impatient of an inter-
ssion in the enjoyment, or pursuit of their bruitish sen-
alities, that they can reckon no time seasonable for
riousness and sobriety; but absolutely conclude a-
inst them, let the premises bee what they will. If
ey dream of a long and prosperous life, they bid their
*ls take their ease, eat, drink, and be merry, having goods
id up for many years*; or if they fear their daies may be
ortned, and their mirth spoil'd, yet they resolve to
ve it whil'st they may, and cry, *Let us eat and drink,
r to morrow we shall dye:* Those are such that account
licarinesse and Consideration, the greatest miseries that
n befall them, and whil'st they are not reduc't to a

neceſſity of theſe, they eſcape well enough, what e
betides the world. There's nothing they ſeem to fe
more than being brought into their wits, and there
they ſtrive with all their might againſt the means of th
recovery out of this voluntary madneſs. They have
far unmann'd themſelves, that they are even aſham
to ſhew that they are owners of humane nature, by
ber reflections upon their own actions and Gods diſpe
ſations: As if they were ſo far engag'd in their deſigns a
courſes, that in point of honour they could not now
on any tearms retreat, but muſt confidently proceed
act the Bruits on this Stage, though they turn Devils
it in the next. Theſe indeed are a ſort of men, rat
fit to be Character'd to move others to compaſſion (
far as they deſerve it) than to be ſpoke to in order to th
Reformation. Who can cure his deafneſs, that ſh
his ears? Or make him hear that is ſo wilfully dea
How can he underſtand, that hath made himſelf Dr
with a ſtupifying Potion, which hath very much depri
him of reaſon and foreſight, and makes him go laugh
down to deſtruction, in deſpite of the faireſt warning
loudeſt calls to prevent it? To attempt by inſtructi
to reduce ſuch as theſe, ſeems an undertaking le
leſs improbable, than by a formal diſcourſe to perſu
a Bedlam into his right minde. But yet ſome differe
there is amongſt theſe prophaner ones: thy are not all
ſotted into the ſame degree of ſtupidity, nor all equ
reſolv'd againſt any amendment, nor equally prejud
againſt the means which tend to it. Wherefore tho
I have little expectation of ſuch kinde of Readers, a
leſs of doing them good, yet if this Paper ſhould chan
into any of their hands, if they have the patience
read any thing beſide Drollery, let me crave the a
tion of their mindes, whilſt I ſoberly adviſe with the
a few words.

Tell me then, I beseech you, Sirs, such of you that have yet so much Reason and Conscience left you, as to acknowledge a Being above your selves, who made you and all the world, and governs all with infinite wisdome and Justice; Tell me, I say, whether these providences that have lately befaln our Nation, be not of an extraordinary nature, and therefore in all reason sent upon some great design? If one Embassadour after another be dispatcht from a Prince, to any of his Neighbours, with a more than usual solemnity, do wee not presently guess that there are some great affairs in agitation? And is it for nothing, or upon any trivial errand, that the Soveraign Majesty of the World, Commissions his most astonishing and magnificent Judgements to march one at the heels of another, to any particular people? Are not their Instructions, think we, as important as their Appearance is terrible? And if it bee so, does it not then concern the Inhabitants of the Land, to whom this Message is directed, diligently to attend to, and faithfully and speedily to obey the same? How high an affront will it be, when Embassadours are dispatcht from heaven, for us not to vouchsafe them Audience? But methinks, scarce any can be so wilfully deaf, as not to understand this much, which they utter in a voice full of power and Majesty, *That the great God is very sorely displeased with the waies of this people, being such, that hee'l no longer bear with them as formerly.* And shall not the hearing of this awaken us all, to a strict and serious enquiry into our particular waies, whether they be not such as draw out Gods displeasure against us? If we had forgot the noise of Trumpets and Drums, which a few years since read us this Lesson; or if wee are deaf to the shrill Cannon which inculcates the same; or heeded not the sweeping Plague, which did not steal more *silently* upon thousands, than it *loudly* warn'd all that surviv'd;

yet let us attend to the voice of these roaring Flame
which once more call out to us, with such a fierceness
as one would think, should neither be dis-regarded, n
in haste forgotten. Shall God speak thus once, and agai
and shall not wee hearken? Doth he manifest his wra
and shall not we be seiz'd with an Holy fear? Are
troubles so great, and shall we not diligently search
is the *Achan*, what is the *accursed thing* that occasio
all? Do the storms rise, and the Seas swell, threatni
us with a shipwrack, and shall wee not examine (
by casting lots, but turning our eyes inward) whet
we are not the *Jonah's* that cause it? What, doth it see
a small matter whether God be pleased with us or no
Is there any in the whole World whose favour we mo
need, and whom we are more bound to regard? Is it not
from whom wee receiv'd our lives and all our mercie
and on whose good pleasure we depend for all? Is it
into his hands that we must shortly fall, when we lea
the world, by him to bee dispos'd of to our everlasti
state? Yea, even now, are not we and all our affairs a
solutely in his hands, and at his ordering, to do with
as seems good in his sight? And can any bee so sotti
then, as to imagine that it's not worth while to exami
how matters stand betwixt God and their Souls? A
whether their behaviour hath been such as is acceptab
to him, that accordingly they may proceed with bold
ness, or retreat whil'st there is Liberty, and carefu
reform themselves. This is the sum of all, that I wou
advise careless sinners to, even faithfully to consid
their waies, every man by himself, what he hath do
towards the kindling of Gods anger, and what he may
to appease it; to think what it is in him particula
God aims at, and speedily to set against it.

And besides, the wrath revealed against us in th
dispensations, which may drive us to this work, d

ers not appear ſo much mercy in them, as may quicken, d encourage us to it? All that hath hitherto befain , hath but the nature of a warning to us that are left; d how great ſoever the terrour of theſe warnings hath em'd, yet that was but neceſſary the deeplier to affect ur rocky hearts. And it can hardly be conceived what ourſe could be taken, more likely to reclaim a people, to hom all the alluring invitations, and ſevere threat- ings of the Word, are grown in a manner contempti- le, as I have formerly obſerv'd; Theſe are like the ſt remedies which Phyſicians uſe to dying perſons, which e wont either to preſerve life, or haſten death. So at God doth not only acquaint us by theſe his dealings at hee is diſpleaſed with us, but in the next place, *that he is exceeding deſirous to reform us, and will upon our turn to him, have mercy upon us, and pardon us.* What aſon elſe can bee aſſign'd why he ſhould not immedi- ely have deſtroyed us, without affording any ſpace Repentance or capacity of mercy? Might not God eaſily, had it pleaſed him, have ſent ſuch flames up- n us, as ſhould not ſo much have tended to enlighten, utterly to conſume us? That ſhould have devoured e Inhabitants as well as the Houſes? If the Husband- an lop and prune his Tree, dig about and dung it, one ear after another, waiting on, and trying it; is not this ſign that he much deſires ſome ſuch fruit, as may pre- erve it from being *cut down as a cumberer of the ground?* nd what ſhall we go on to fruſtrate theſe merciful de- gns of the God of Love, who tries all waies with us to waken and reduce us? Hath hee not as it were hedg'd our way, and beſet us round with ſuch ſtartling Pro- idences, that one would thing nothing but a wilful re- olution to damn our ſelves, in deſpite of all oppoſition, ould carry us over them to farther wickedneſs and de- ruction? Hath he not plac't before us thouſands of car-

kaſſes

lusties pil'd up on heaps? And set his Angels with a
ming Sword to stop us in our course? And is sin s
lovely thing in our eyes, that we will venture upon
Sword, break through these flames, trample over
and bones to obtain it? Yea, shall we still remain
bewitche by it, when God hath purposely represente
to us in such ghastly shapes, as might serve most effe
ally to undeceive us, and deliver us from its pernic
charms? There is nothing in the whole World ind
either base or hurtful enough to discover all the h
someness and mischief of sin, yet when it hath so fa
bus'd and besotted the sinner, that hee can see no h
in it notwithstanding all the bad names that are given
the most likely way to make it truly known to him,
to shew some such effects of it, as the faculties yet
him acknowledge most dreadful, and the cause of the
therefore by all means to bee avoided. Thus if
silly childe cannot be kept from poison, by hearing
the mischief of it, because it looks and tastes so like S
gar: Let him be soundly whipt for touching it, and
will do most to make him hate it. If he will needs
playing with a glittering Knife, let him once feel
draw blood upon him, and that will sooneſt prevail w
him to throw it away. And shall not wee, who h
been worse than childish in our greedy pursuits of se
ingly pleasing sins, shall wee not run from them as fa
when we see what we have overtaken? He that hath
takes up an hot Iron, because he saw not the redness,
soon rid his hands of it, when he feels it stick to his fi
gers and burn his flesh.

Though drunkenness, gluttony, whoredomes, gain
cozenage, oppression and pride, once seemed very am
ble and alluring to degenerate unreasonable sinner
whilest they strongly imagined they felt the sweetne
and profit of them; yet shall they seem so still, w
th

they have seen what sad work they have lately made amongst us? how they have laid thousands in their graves, and made our flourishing City to fall on heaps, as if it would become a kind of common Tomb to its dead Inhabitants; to serve as a Monument to Posterity, who should find written upon it, *Here lie the fruits of sin.* Shall we dote upon a painted poysoned Harlot, and that after the Varnish is fallen off, and the poyson revealed? Shall we still stroke and play with the Serpent, after we have heard his hissings, and felt some effects of his envenomed sting? God forbid that we should be so wilful and foolish, to imbrace the dart that hath murdered our friends, to court the flames that have burnt our houses, and will do worse than all this?

As then our calamities tell us to the quick, that God hath observed and altogether dislik't our wayes, so we see there is Mercy manifested in these Judgements, whilst they tend to rouze us out of our security, to convince us of the mischievous nature of sin before we feel the worst of it, and afford us ground of hope, that upon our conviction and reformation there is yet mercy to be obtained for us. If then we have any regard to our Makers pleasure, or our own interest; if we have any ingenuity or love to our selves, let us hearken to these earnest calls of a compassionate God, and speedily accept of motions for peace upon reasonable terms, least our continued stubbornness should provoke him to resolve concerning us; that since we accepted not, nor improv'd the space he allotted us to repent in, henceforward all signs and professions of Repentance shall come too late to prevent our ruine: And that seems to be another Lesson which these Judgements teach us, *That if we contemn them, and disregard God speaking to us by them, there is great hazard that this our incorrigibleness, and strange stupidity, will procure our final overthrow.* If we reject the

Scepter

Scepter of Grace which hath been held forth to us, w
can we expect but that it ſhould be withdrawn, an
frightful Sword ſet up in its place? If we are as reſolv
to hold faſt our ſins, as *Pharaoh* was to keep the *Iſraeli*
our reſolutions may coſt us as dear as his did hi
Though our God be long-ſuffering, yet will he alway
bear? Will he never do more than gently laſh us, a
then wait to ſee what good his ſtroaks do upon us? I
we ſhall ſtill make void his expectations of our amend
ment, will he not at length take another courſe with u
Hath not God been as it were laying ſiege to the hea
of this people, and ſummoned us again and again t
make a ſurrender of our ſelves to him, uſing thoſe ſeve
ral Engines that might ſerve to batter our hardneſs, an
prevail with us? And if we ſtill hold out againſt him
rejecting the gracious meſſages he ſends us, ſlighting
the Warning-pieces he hath ſhot off, what have we t
look for next, but that his Murdering Canons ſhould
be planted againſt us? That as by his laſt act of hoſtil
ty he burnt one of our chief Forts, ſo he ſhould proceed
to level all to the ground. If God hath ſmote ſome o
us with the Sword, others with the Peſtilence, and o
verthrown ſome of us as he overthrew *Sodom* and *Gomo
rah*, and yet we will not return to him; may we no
fear that our deſolation is as near as theirs was who were
thus guilty, and of whom God thus complains? *Amos* 4.
The continuance and growth of ſin under a ſmarting
Rod, adds an high degree of hainouſneſs thereto, which
is uſually followed with a vengeance proportionably hea
vy. When a Nation ſhall ſolemnly bid defiance to
the moſt High, and engage in a War with the Lord of
Hoſts, fighting againſt him by renewed Rebellions, an
he againſt them by reinforc't Judgements, we may eaſi
ly know who's like to come by the worſt: He hath Ar
rows in his Quiver againſt which the rockieſt ſtuff
hea

heart is but a weak defence, which can shatter into pieces those who will not be softned: And he hath frequently expreſt his unalterable will to conquer unrelenting ſinners, and that he will even take pleaſure in ſubduing ſuch ſtout ſpirits whom nothing before would work upon, or bring to take notice of his hand ſtretcht out againſt them. Of thoſe who profanely cried, that his *word was but wind, and that they ſhould never ſee evil*; he threatens that this *Word* of his, which they ſcoff'd at, ſhould *be fire in the mouth of his Prophets, and the people ſhould be wood*, *Jer.*5.13,14. And *Ezek.*5.13. Having before ſpoken of all the ſad things he would bring upon a ſtubborn people, he adds; *Thus ſhall mine anger be accompliſhed, and my fury reſt upon them, and I will be comforted, and they ſhall know that I the Lord have ſpoken it in my zeal, when I have accompliſhed my fury in them.* Who can in reaſon expect that God ſhould alwayes maintain his creatures in being, and continue their comforts, whilſt they imploy their life and all their mercies againſt him who gave them both? Would not a Prince rather impoveriſh and deſtroy any part of his Dominions, than let it ſerve only for an harbour and ſupply to his mortal enemies? Oh that *England* may not bear that doleful word pronounc't concerning her, which *Iſrael* once did, *Ezek.* 7.6. *An end is come, the end is come, it watcheth for thee, behold it is come.* Let us not go on to provoke the God of heaven to poure out upon us all the plagues that are threatned to thoſe whom no former means will reclaim, to decree a Conſumption by Sword or Famine, or any the like deſtroyers. You that have no regard to your ſouls, methinks ſhould be more concerned for your temporal welfare, your lives, your friends, your eſtates, than dangly to hazard all for the ſervice of ſome baſe luſt, which will but repay you with damnation at laſt, beſides all the hurt it does in the mean time to your ſelves, and

those about you. Oh be perſwaded at length, to take pity on the Land of your Nativity; yea, to take pity on your ſelves, your children, and the Wives of your bo-ſome? How could you bear it to have theſe raviſht from your ſides, and murdered before your faces; or worſe than murdered by ghaſtly famine? when you ſhould ſee them, and feel your ſelves, as it were, kill'd by piece-meal; yea, when your raging hunger ſhould make you wiſh for, and haſten one anothers death, and cauſe you to take away life from them to whom you gave it, and your bellies to become the Tombs of thoſe who came from your loins? Ah Sirs, what reflections would you have in ſuch a doleful day as this, on your former delici-ous and riotous exceſſes? Would not the memory of your paſt fulneſs, and the abuſe of it, help to tear your hearts, as much as preſent want would do your bowels? And know, that plenty of Gods creatures which we now enjoy, is not ſo much an argument that this evil ſhall never betide us, as our ſinful laviſhing of them in gluttony and drunkenneſs, is, that it may. Sin hath brought theſe, and worſe than all theſe things upon divers Kingdomes: God grant it may not upon ours. And therefore do I mention them, not to encreaſe the unprofitable fears of any, but to ſtir us up all to that repentance which is moſt likely to prevent them, or will be ſure to ſecure us from any conſiderable hurt by them. But if we cry only, God forbid that ever ſuch things ſhould happen, and yet take the direct way to procure them, then your ſelves only muſt bear the blame, as well as feel the ſmart. Fair warning hath been given us by what we have already felt, and we may now conceive God ſaying to us, *Go your wayes, ſin no more, leaſt worſe things come unto you.* And if ſuch admonitions as theſe, ſo loudly and ſo ſeriouſly uttered, ſhall be diſregarded, what greater ſenſleſneſs can be imagined? Or what more preſaging and de-

ing mine, than such a senselesness and affected stupidity?
And let none be so weak or inconsiderate, as to imagine,
God aims not at them, nor hath any controversie with
them; because they have hitherto felt little or nothing
of those Judgements that have been abroad in the Land:
Or let any profligate Atheists add this to the rest of their
rational arguings against a Providence, that they them-
selves who contemn it, live securely and at ease, whilst
many that believed and reverenc't it, suffer under the
severity of its Dispensations: Nor let them hence con-
firm themselves in practises as bruitish as these Opini-
ons (which were principally minted for their sakes) out
of a conceit, that all danger is far from them, or at least,
that they are no more obnoxious than others. For, to take
off these dangerous mistakes, it is to be considered, that
the design of these sad Providences is by no means to be
confined to those particular persons upon whom they
have fallen heaviest; but their Errand is to warn all,
whilst they strike some, which is no way difficult to be
apprehended. A Warning-Piece shot off by an Enemy
who hath besieged a Town, though it might happily hurt
some single Townsman, is nevertheless directed to all:
A Beacon when it is fired, gives warning as much to the
whole Country, as to him on whose ground it stands,
or whose wood may be imployed for that fire. And may
we not look upon our burning City, as a kind of Beacon
kindled to give notice to the whole Island, that an E-
nemy is coming against us? Such an Enemy as may en-
gage us all, not to take Arms, but suddenly to lay them
down, and meet him with such humble submissions, and
earnest supplications, as are wont to gain the cheapest
and most honourable Victory: That God, in his deal-
ings with a Nation, whose wayes are generally corrupt-
ed, layes his strokes upon some, is but Justice even to
them; that he treats not all thus, is meer mercy; that

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he takes these and spares others, some better, worse, is purely from his Soveraignty, and ought referr'd to his own good pleasure; and therefore we have no other reason for it, readily to be acqui in. Both Charity, and (frequently) great Reason bid us to censure their crimes the greatest, whose ings are so: For many times we find that God singled out his faithfullest servants as marks for his est arrows; of which sort of Dispensations, even men sometimes, but wicked men alwayes, are very competent Judges. But if any upon this acc should grow more indifferent to Godliness, when sees it will not secure its followers; nay, that an nency of it doth oft as much expose its owners, as doth Towers and Cedars to Storms and Lightning he therefore think it rather to be shunn'd than sough ter; his arguing will be found as unreasonable as dangerous. Alas, poor blinded Sensualists! you that strangers to the life and livelihood, and the great cerns of Immortal Souls, little know the secret, transactions betwixt them and their God, in that time when you may judge them forsaken of him. L do you know how this Godliness helps to bear up hearts under the weightiest pressures, and like a Amulet, in time of Infection, secures them from mischief of those evils with which you may appre them overborn: Wherefore leave them to God Judgement, and look you rather to your selves, you are to learn by, and how you ought to improve kind of dealings; even the mercy that you are spa when so many others are visited one way or other, the greater engagement upon you to return to him deals so favourably with you; and you may be suppo the fitter for this great and solemn work of Repent in that Judgements are brought so near, as may serv

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hicken and affect you, but yet ſtand at ſuch a diſtance
er they may not overwhelm you.

And laſtly, You may perceive, that if good Men
emſelves undergo ſo much, it's time for you to look
out you. *If Judgement begin at the houſe of God, what
all the end be of thoſe who obey not the Goſpel?* You may
ence learn, that it is not becauſe you are better, or more
Gods favour than others who ſuffer, that you ſeem to
e better than they; and it may therefore caſt you into
fear, leaſt your puniſhment be reſerv'd a while, be-
iſe it ſhall bee laid on for ever, *Job* 21. 30. If the
hildren be now corrected, Baſtards ſhall not alwaies
unpuniſht. You cannot then conclude, that they
ho have drank deepeſt of this Cup, were ſinners above
l that dwelt in *England*; but this you may conclude, that
ept you Repent, you ſhall all likewiſe periſh.

Even temporal deſtruction, as I have ſaid, you have
aſon to expect; but if you take ſuch comminations as
ords of courſe, which Preachers are ſtill filling the ears
their people withall, no more to be regarded, than
e ſilly Predictions of Aſtrologers, and do hereupon
rden your ſelves in ſin, as if no danger was near, know
for certain, that ſuch miſeries are coming upon you,
you ſhall neither know how to prevent, nor ever re-
ove from off you. And that's the laſt thing I ſhall men-
on, which theſe Calamities ſuggeſt to us, *That they who are
t bettered by them, nor any other means that in this life time
e us'd with them, ſhall at length be covered with confuſion,
d lye down in thoſe ſorrows which will admit of no relief,
d whence there ſhall bee no releaſe.* I cannot certainly
y, but you may ſtretch your ſelves upon your beds of
ſe, and continue your pleaſant dreams, yet a while
nger. Perhaps you may laugh and play away the re-
ainder of your daies, as you have done all that went
efore; you may yet have a few more merry meetings

and pleasing entertainments; you may be loaded with riches, crowned with rose-buds, glutted with fleshly delights, and may keep up your wonted height of pride and bravery, insomuch that in your own esteem, and in theirs, who judge of persons and things by the same false rules, you may pass for the only happy men in the World: But yet I can and dare say, that though your Lives and your Pleasures should be thus prolonged to a hundred years, you are but miserable men, whose wayes are now accursed, as your end shall bee. Even all the while the vengeance of God hangs over your heads, like a Sword by a Twine-thred, and will shortly fall upon the Scalp of such as go on in their trespasses; It pursues you at the heels, and though it seem to tarry, will certainly overtake you. However you may mis-call it Patience, you shall finde that God is no more slack concerning his Threatnings, than his Promises. *In the hand of the Lord there is a Cup, and the Wine is red: it is full of mixture, and he poureth out of the same*; and though they should escape when it is poured out, Yet *the Dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them*, Psal. 75. 8. These are the distinguishing judgments which shall light upon the ungodly, and none but them. Then at length shall men *discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not: when that day cometh that shall burn as an Oven, and all the proud, yea, all that do wickedly shall be as stubble.*

Whatever false consequences wanton Sinners draw from Gods forbearance of them in this day of his patience, or from his promiscuous dealing with good and bad in this state of tryal, they shall soon be freed from their mistakes, when they shall finde and feel, in what a different manner they are treated in the other state. This will make them acknowledge, that *verily there is*

God, a Righteous God, *who judgeth in the earth.* Here indeed they were Neighbours, and had bodies alike, and might therefore dye by the same Diseases: Their houses were joyned, and might therefore burn together; but their souls were not alike, nor shall they fare alike, or live together any longer, but betwixt them will bee a *great Gulf* fixed, over which there will be no passing for the persons, nor any translation of their conditions one to another. Though you might remove your dwellings and scape the Infection, or have estates of that nature that Fire did not consume them, yet all your refuges will fail, when these last woes shall bee brought upon you. Then shall the scorners who made light of threatnings, that *hid themselves under falshood, and made lies their refuge,* finde, that their *Covenant with death shall be disannulled, their agreement with hell shall not stand:* When this overflowing scourge shall pass thorow the ungodly World, they shall all be trodden down by it. Though they might escape Sword and Plague, Fire and Famine, yet Hell they shall never escape. And are there any that own the name of Men, and desire the reputation of Christians, of such a desperate insensibleness of their own concerns, that the known certainty of infinite everlasting torments, in case they hold on their present course, will give them neither check nor diversion? Such indeed who can thorowly perswade themselves to be Infidels, may possibly live in a stupid peace, till they are brought with the Devils, to *believe and tremble.* But for them who take on them to believe all that is in the Gospel, and yet walk in those very waies, to which this Gospel threatens everlasting destruction, may we not admire what strange devices they have got, to keep themselves peaceable and steady in this their furious march to Damnation? What, Sirs, have you a belief for what Scripture tells you of the weightiest and most concerning

matters in the World, and yet can you alwaies drive this out of your thoughts? Do you think it of no consequence to consider where the way will end, in which you are walking with so much confidence? Do you not know well enough, that if you never turn, you are certainly undone? And that whil'st you delay it, you run such a hazard as every man in's right wits would beware of? Every step you tread being upon such a dangerous precipice that nothing but the mercy which you daily abuse, and which will not alwaies bear such usage, keeps you from falling headlong? And when once it's withdrawn, down you go, and are lost for ever. Is this your case, and can you not spare time to think how to get out of it? Alas Sirs, sad and serious thoughts will be good cheap in the other World: As much as you fear and shun them now, then you shall bee sufficiently haunted with them; but as serviceable as now they might be, then they shall nothing avail you. To think in time which way to avoid perdition, should not, methinks bee so tedious and unpleasant to those to whom it is so necessary, and may be as advantagious: but if this be neglected, to think what you have brought your selves to, and how strangely and wilfully you have done it, shall fill you with a sadness that will break your hearts, but nothing better your estates. What then are those dreams wherewith you delude your selves into a quiet continuance in an ungodly state, which is like to prove so bitter in the end? What do you think it's best to go on a while longer, that you have yet time enough before you? But do you well consider, how dear this *little while longer* may cost you? Have you any ground to expect to bee waited on much longer? Doth not the time of patience seem expiring? Are not the years wherein God resolv'd to try you, what fruit you would bring forth, near to an end? And is this a time to dally with the Almighty, when hee's coming

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orth ſo ſeverely to reckon with you? Is your Sun ſet-
ings, and yet do you loyter? Is the Ship ſinking, and are you
et unreſolv'd whether you had beſt ſhift for you ſelves?
Certainly they who take not this as a fit ſeaſon for Re-
entance, would by their good will never Repent, and
is to be fear'd never will till it is too late.

But further, you are not I hope, ſo vain as to conceit,
hat there is any other way beſide ſound Repentance; and
horow Converſion, to ſecure your ſelves from that
rath which is denounc't againſt, and will certainly
ome upon the *Children of Diſobedience*. If you believe
he Scripture, which I now ſuppoſe you do, you cannot
arbour ſuch a conceit, which is there ſo often and ſo
lainly contradicted: And as far, methinks, you ſhould
e from imagining, if this wrath be not thus prevented,
hat ever it can with any patience be endured, or by any
eans remov'd. Do you indeed take hell for a tollera-
le evil? even more tollerable than an holy heart and
fe, by which it might be avoided? In how dark and
lind a ſtate are they who run from their felicity as an
urtful thing? And in how ſad a caſe, whom nothing
ut woful experience will convince of this miſtake? But
hat, do you ever hope to be able to contend with the
oſt High, to grapple with Omnipotence it ſelf? Do
ou think you can as eaſily reſiſt his Power, as you could
ſobey his Commands? If this ſhould once become
e only refuge that's left you, woe to you that ever you
ere born. Did you ever yet hear of any that entred
he Liſts with God and prevailed? that overcame him
y ſtrong hand? Should all the Infernal Hoſts joyn
orces with rebellious ſinners, how utterly unable would
hey be for one minute to withſtand the conquering Arm
f the Almighty? And canſt thou a ſingle man, an im-
otent worm, do any thing againſt it? Why, doſt thou
ot know that a frown of his countenance is enough to

dash all created courage? the breath of his mouth sufficient to destroy the world? If thou be such a couragious man as to venture upon the Divine displeasure, thou shouldst have gone and plac't thy self in the midst of one of *Londons* burning streets, and have tryed how thou couldst encounter the fury of those flames, and how much they would have valued thy opposition; and thence thou might'st learn what Man can do against his Maker, or against any of his creatures that go forth to destroy with Commission from him. Do but imagine thy self hurl'd into the midst of those burnings, and there to have been kept alive whilst they lasted, (which is no difficulty to him that made the world of nothing) how couldst thou have born such a lodging, even but for three daies space? But what if it had been for so many thousand years? Bethink thee then how thou canst *dwell with everlasting burnings*, which will be the undoubted portion of all unpardoned, unconverted ones. Do you not indeed believe, that *Christ will come in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that would not obey the Gospel?* And whither will you then betake your selves? or to whom will you flie? When not only a City or Kingdome, but all this lower world shall be of a flame; *when the Heavens shall pass away with a noise, and the Elements shall melt with fervent heat*; when an unquenchable fire shall be kindled above, and below, and on every side you, where do you hope for shelter? To cry out to Rocks and Mountains to fall on and cover you, will then little avail you. *Oh who can stand before the Lord when he is angry? who knows the power of his wrath?* But shall not the demonstrations and appearances of it, which you have already beheld, prevent the farther bold exposure of your selves thereto? Have you not had a kind of glimpse of hell flashing before your faces, and will it nothing daunt you? Will you like those *Ezek.* 15. 7. *Go out of one fire, to be devou-*

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red by another? Will you go on like an Oxe to the ſlaughter, when you are told whither you are going, and the inſtruments of death are laid before you? Will you ſtill believe that the *ſtoln waters* which folly affords are *ſweet?* That her *bread eaten in ſecret places is pleaſant?* When it is revealed to you, that her proviſions are baits, and their pleaſure mortal; that *the dead are there, and her* (former) *gueſts in the depths of hell.* Will you go on to carry fewel to that pile wherein you your ſelves muſt be conſumed? Will you ſtill imbrace and cheriſh thoſe luſts that will, like an unnatural Monſter, gnaw out the bowels of thoſe that nouriſh them, and feed upon the ſlaughter and ruine of their deareſt lovers? Will nothing allay the Adulterers heats, till they turn to the fire that *never goes out?* Will the Drunkard ſwallow down his immoderate draughts, till at length he be ſeized with *Dives* his thirſt, never to be quencht? Will the fond adorers of the riches and Gallantry of the world continue their dotage, till they ſee their Gold and Silver melted, and not only their ſtately houſes, but their fruitful Lands in flames about their ears, and all that wherein they gloried vaniſhing into ſmoak and aſhes; and ſhall find themſelves inwardly tormented by their inordinate love to theſe Idols, more than by any fire whereinto they may be plung'd? The good Lord open the eyes and change the hearts of theſe ſecure and ſenſeleſs ones, and ſhew them the hell that is in ſin it ſelf, that they may never feel that which it procures; that they may diſcern the *miſery and deſtruction that is in their wayes*, before their *wickedneſs burn as the fire, and devoure them like briars and thorns, Iſa.* 9.18.

But beſides the looſe and groſly profane, there are multitudes to be ſeen who ſeem far more ſerious, and better affected with Gods Judgements abroad in the Land, eſpecially they upon whom they have fallen hea-

vily. But alas! how many of these are there more apprehensive of their outward losses, than of the sins that brought them? Such who would have thought themselves well enough had they but kept their goods, though their sins also had been kept with them? How happy would these men be, if their fitness for comfort was as great as their need of it is? But how sad a case is it to have the world frown upon us, and God frown too? to be deprived of temporal enjoyments, and destitute of spiritual blessings? to have our Idols snatcht away, and to be unacquainted with the true and living God? But that I may not seem to aggravate your grief, and bring you nothing but sad tidings, know, though I cannot speak a word of comfort to you whilst you continue in your present carnal state, yet would you but make haste out of the same, there is great Mercy before you, and a way open for your access to that Grace whence you may receive an abundant supply for all your wants, and true joy in the midst of your troubles. And methinks this should revive you, to hear that your condition is not yet miserable, past all remedy: What though you should never recover to your former height and fulness in the world, yet if your pride and covetousness be abated, and your hearts by Grace raised nearer to God, as a pledge of your being shortly raised to Glory, you will have no reason to complain of that abasement which was the beginning and occasion of this happy exaltation. Happy indeed are they that thus rise by their falls, and being thrown to the earth, thereby rebound the higher towards heaven: And this happiness, I say, you are yet in a capacity of attaining to; which priviledge, was it rightly apprehended, might well take off from the sense of any other ill circumstances you are plunged into; and was it carefully improv'd, would make a full amends for whatever losses you have sustained. And now

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to ſee in good earneſt about this work of gaining heaven inſtead of earth, will be found the quickeſt and the ſureſt courſe to make you ſo rich, and to ſet you in ſuch a thriving way, as will not only recompence your loſſes, but keep you from ever being greatly impoveriſht any more. This to the worldly wiſe, I know, will ſeem very ſtrange, and far from any appearance of truth: They who knew nothing better for man than to be rich, and live high in the world, cannot imagine which way he can make advantage of being brought into a poor and low condition; and as little can they imagine, what that is in all the world which can make amends for ſuch misfortunes, (as they call them) except they may be repaid in kind. If by loſing an hundred they could gain a thouſand, or miſſing one Trade could light upon another, with quicker and better returns, they could well enough underſtand this to be a gaining by their loſſes; and he that could teach them this notable art ſhould be a welcome man, a Comforter indeed: But if you ſend them to look after great matters in another world, to repair their damages in this, and to get their ſouls enricht, when they feel their bodies pincht, this is but cold comfort, dry and unſavoury diſcourſe to the poor worldling, whoſe feeling is all his faith, who ſeeming to himſelf a meer lump of fleſh, minds and reliſhes only earthly things. And accordingly their behaviour too plainly diſcovers theſe their unbelieving and carnal apprehenſions and affections. For ſince the hand of God was upon them, hath not this been in a manner all the trouble they have felt, to think what a breach is made upon their eſtates, and what fair hopes are blaſted, many likely projects com'n to juſt nothing, and the fruits of their long labour and care ſuddenly vaniſht; ſo that they who thought their Neſts well feathered (as they uſe to ſpeak) and themſelves warm and ſecurely plac't therein, are now

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unroofted, and many of them put to begin the world new? And hath not this been the very sum of all mens contrivances and endeavours, how they might again to their best advantage, and sooneſt get up where they have loſt, and moſt ſucceſsfully purſue their former designs of growing rich? Reflect upon thy ſelf, Reader, whether this hath not been thy very courſe and frame, if thou art one whom the fire hath unſettled.

If you ask me, whether then I condemn your care to make proviſion for your ſelves and families, and whether I would have you rather ſit ſtill and ſtarve, than look out for needful and ſeaſonable ſupplies? I anſwer, Though I am far from ſaying this ought not to be done, yet I muſt needs ſay, there is ſomething which ought far leſs to be left undone, and both may very well ſtand together. For I hope your ſouls are of as much value as your bodies, and their happineſs ought to be as diligently and ſpeedily looked after: Now methinks the coſtly experience you have had of the vanity and inſtability of theſe outward things, ſhould give you very full conviction that your happineſs is not plac't in them, and that he is very unwiſe who puts confidence in ſuch deceitful riches that *make to themſelves wings, and flee away*. Shall not this then put you upon a careful ſearch, where there is nothing to be found out that is more ſolid, durable, and ſatisfying? And if you follow on this ſearch as you ought, you will conclude with *Solomon*, after all his illicitous enquiries after Good, and his clear diſcovery of the vanity of the creature, *That to fear God, and keep his Commandments, is the whole duty of man, Eccleſ.* 12. 13. And not his duty only, but his greateſt intereſt, even in this life, but eſpecially in that which is to come, which ſeems couched in the following words of the Wiſe Man, ver. 14. *For God ſhall bring every work into Judgement, with every ſecret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be*

and if he do ſo, we may be ſure hee'l treat men accordingly, and will, as he hath promiſed, make thoſe that have ſerved him everlaſtingly happy, when the wicked ſhall be adjudged to their threatned miſery. Why will you not then turn about, and change your deſires and endeavours, and be as induſtrious for holineſs and the happineſs that ever attends it, as you have been for the world, wherein, through your own fooliſh forbidden expectations, and inordinate love, you have met with ſo much vexation and diſſatisfaction? You ſee how it hath ſerved you after you have laboured for it ſo long, and imbrac'd it with ſo much affection and dearneſs; its fled from you in a trice, and hath left you deſolate. Why therefore ſhould you truſt it any more, to expoſe your ſelves at every turn to the ill effects of its treachery; which is indeed but Juſtice to thoſe whoſe hearts are firſt treacherouſly departed from God? If you be falſe to your Maker, never expect the creature ſhould be true to you: No, aſſure your ſelves, it will break from you when you think you have it faſt, and forſake you when you need it moſt; and will no more hearken to you, when you call, and roar, and mourn after it, than *Baal* did to his Worſhippers: Torment your ſelves never ſo much for its abſence; as they, we read, flaſht themſelves with Knives and Lancers, yet it will neither pittie nor regard you. And though it ſhould remain with you as long as you live, yet at death it will leave you, with your heart broken at the parting, and will afford you no relief in that hour of your extremitie, much leſs in that ſtate whereinto you muſt then depart. And what will you ſtill labour for the wind, and ſet your heart upon that which is not? Surelie you have felt enough to make you more warie and wiſe; wherefore come rather and once make experiment, whether God will leave you as the world hath done, and is like to do; whether his promiſes are no truer than its flatteries;

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whether Grace be as frail and perishing a thing, as the goods you have lost; whether your hearts will not hold this Treasure safer, than your Chests can do any other. My advice to you is the same with that of *Pauls* to *Timothy*, 1 *Ep.* 6. 9,10,11,12. That avoiding that resolution *to be rich, which brings temptations and snares, that love of money, which is the root of all evil, you would now follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness, fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life.* And if you will be perswaded hereto, set about the work in good earnest, ply it hard, and never give off till you have made something of it. Remember you are labouring for an Estate that will never be lost; and rest not till you have got those affections on God, and the things above, which you were wont to lavish upon things below. And when you have done this, your work is in a manner finisht: For the way to have God and Christ, Grace and Glorie to be yours, is to desire after, and love them more than all things else. When once you have got your hearts in heaven, you have got a treasure there: Whatever other duties are required of you, will be found natural and easie, when you are but principled with a prevailing, deep-rooted love of heavenlie things. And one would think it no hard thing to attain such holie affections, if first you will but well and dulie consider the worthlesness of all things else, till you are cur'd of your excessive and undeserved admiration of them; and then will be as much in meditation of the excellencie, the suitableness, the sufficiencie of those things that are invisible and eternal; and how great reason you have, and what engagements you lie under to fix and settle your hearts upon them. Consider well what you owe to the giver and preserver of your life, and all the comforts of it, and how you ought to stand affected toward him who thought not his own unvaluable Bloud too good to be shed for such sinners as we. Think, if you have such

thing within you, as an immortal Soul, whether the
ealth, and safety, and felicity thereof, bee not of far
reater moment and worth, than the prosperity of the
ody: and whether an unexpressible fulnes of all bles-
ednes and joy for ever, deserve not more esteem, than
ny of the short uncertain advantages and delights which
is world affords you? Continue such kinde of con-
derations as these, till you feel they have an influ-
nce upon your souls, to change the bent and stream
f your affections and inclinations. And be diligent in
e use of all other means appointed by God, for the be-
ming and carrying on a work of grace in the heart of
an; and above all, bee very importunate suitors at
e Throne of Grace, that God would bestow upon
u his holy Spirit, which he hath promised to those that
k him; that by the power hereof. Your mindes may
e enlightned to a right apprehension of things, and
ur affections strongly carried out to that which best de-
ves them, that you may be brought, with the Apostle,
t so much to *look at*, or bee concern'd for, *those things*
ich are seen, which are temporal, as for those which are not
n, which are eternal. And for the future, let this bee
ur chiefest project, how to gain heaven, and to this
et all your labours and cares. Though it bee not the
ly, yet if it bee the principal trade you drive on, to
rive and grow in Grace, till at length it shall bee im-
ov'd into such a stock of Glory, as will never be spent;
manage all your Talents to the best advantage, as
y redound most to your Masters honour, and bring
e in the richest increase; daily *reaching forth unto those*
ings which are before, pressing toward the mark, for the price
the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Thus set your hearts
d faces *Zion*-ward, looking upon your passage through
is lower World, only as a journey to, and preparation
r the higher. And having so rightly fixt your end and

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your work, taking your ſelves here but for Pilgrims & Strangers, then ſet about your worldly affairs, and take care for the accommodations of life, regarding and deſiring them under this notion, as they are conveniences for a Traveller. And let this true notion of them, moderate and guide all your deſigns and undertakings; Let the utmoſt of your ambition be to maintain your ſelves and thoſe that depend upon you, ſo as you may be beſt to do the ſervice God hath ſet you, and walk comfortably in the way he hath appointed you. Whatever you aim at more, let it be purely and ſincerely for the good of others, and the honour of God. So will you fulfil the commands, 1 *Tim.* 5. 8. *Eph.* 4. 28. and by this means you will moſt eaſily eſcape the temptations which ruine thouſands, who wrong their Conſciences to encreaſe their Eſtates; for will he ſin againſt God to get riches, who deſires them only that he may therewith ſerve and glorifie God. Nor can I think that he by you will have ever the leſs of the World, but I am ſure you will have a great deal more contentment and more ſecurity of what you ſhall have; and when in length you come to leave it, you ſhall neither deſire need it, but ſhall bee ſupply'd with that which is infinitely better; when as thoſe who were bewitcht into unreaſonable fondneſs of their preſent enjoyments, have at laſt irrecoverably loſe both them and their ſouls together.

Again, Methinks, your very worldly wiſdome and ſelf-love may teach you, that if you have been, and ſtill like to be, ſo great loſers by Gods diſpleaſure, the only way is ſpeedily to uſe means for the obtaining his favour; that ſo you may either ſecure your temporal poſſeſſions, or ſomething of more worth in their room when-ever they may bee taken from you. Believe it Sirs, there's nothing of all that which you graſp with

eatest closeness, that you can keep with you, whether od will or no: If hee command it away, it will soon ey his call. You may think of reducing your estates be of that nature, that they shall be exposed to no ca-alties, but all your art will fail you whil'st God is your emy. What foolish merchants then are those, who ake him so by their dishoneſt waies of gaining? Who will found at length to have put the most notorious cheat on themselves, purchasing the curse of God with their just gains, laying themselves open to that wrath from ich neither their wit nor their wealth can secure them: where ever you are, and whatever you have, you are naies alike naked to his stroak. Though you should deep as Hell to hide your selves and your treasure, can easily fetch you thence and pluck you asunder. hen you have been so foolish, as by any way of wick-nes whatever to engage God against you, does it not w concern you to seek after and make suit of his end-ship? Without his leave none of your designs all take effect, without his blessing nothing can truly sper that you take in hand. *Except the Lord build the y, they labour in vain that build it, Psal.* 127.1. What ccess they are like to have, whose undertakings God ll not favour, the Builders of *Babel* can inform you: how much his blessing speeds a work, you may learn om *Nehemiah* and his fellow-builders, *Neh.* 6. *To the n of Ephraim and Samariah, that said in the pride and ness of their heart, that the bricks were fallen down, but y would build with hewen stones, and have Cedars instead Sycamores:* God threatens *to raise up adversaries that uld joyn together against them, the Syrians before, and the hilistines behinde, that should devour Israel with open mouth.* 9. 9, 10, &c. As perhaps when you consider the ines of the City, you look no higher than second causes, it's like you look no higher for its restauration, very

little

little minding what hand God had in the one, and what he have in the other, before it be accomplisht: And while you are thus forgetful of God, and take not his blessing along with you, let your preparations be never so great, and your hopes never so high, your attempts will either be blasted in the beginning, or curst in the end. Read your doom, *Psal.* 28. 5. *Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them and not build them up.* But would you give all diligence to cleanse your hands and purifie your hearts from sin, as well as to clear your streets from the rubbish, lay the foundation in true Repentance and a thorow amendment of your waies? then might you say with *Nehemiah*, *The God of heaven he will prosper us, therefore we his Servants will arise and build, Neh.* 2. 20. This is the way, the surest and only way to make a desolate City Phœnix-like to rise out of it's funeral Ashes with a new life, and Glory greater than it had before its fall. Wherefore let me use the words of *Eliphaz*, *Job* 22. 21, 23. *Acquaint now thy self with God, and be at peace; thereby good shall come unto thee. If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up.* And when once you have well done this great work, when you have got your peace made with God, and have made sure of his especial love and all the mercies contained therein, you may chearfully go about your lawful employments, depending upon his Providence, and submitting your selves to his will, who never is unmindful of those that do so.

And now at length, to those that are in this happy case, my discourse directs it self, even to you that are the cordial Lovers and faithful Servants of the great God; such of you that have born your share in the calamities that have lately befaln us, especially that have suffered much by the fury of those flames, which, without making any difference or shewing any pity, consum-

all that came before them, so far as their commission went: To you, my great request is, that you would remember your selves, raise up, but yet calm your spirits, not harbouring any impatience inconsistent with the dutifulness of Gods children, nor giving way to any dejection, unbeseeming the dignity of that Relation. 'Tis a pleasant work which I would put you upon, and which he who loves your happiness hath by an express command made your duty, even to *possess your souls in patience*, and to be chearful in the midst of all your afflictions. Who then, that hath cause for it (and to such I speak) would not rather live at ease, and enjoy himself in peace and comfort, than vex and torture his own soul by fretting and grieving?

Before I prosecute this exhortation, let mee desire you not to mistake me, as if I was taking you off from all serious and sober consideration, for which Adversity is so proper a season; nor from that moderate and profitable sorrow which shall flow from this consideration. No, rather I would have you improve this time for a thorow search into your own souls, wherein it's like your Consciences will bee more than ordinarily awakened, and will deal truly and plainly with you. And whatever miscarriages these impartial reflections shall discover, which before you discern'd not, or made less matter of, represent them now as hainous and odious to your selves as you well know how, till you finde your hearts wrought to such a measure of godly sorrow, as may stir up in you an unreconcileable hatred of the sin, and engage you vigorously to set against it. You may also make advantage of your sufferings to promote this Repentance, whil'st they shall help you to clearer and more sensible apprehensions of the contrariety of sin to God, and of its pernicousness to man, whereby you may bee brought to a stricter enquiry into, and a greater watchfulness over your waies, as you would avoid the grieving of Gods

Spirit, the wounding of your Consciences, and the sin
of your flesh. And even now let the remembrance
any thing you have done to displease a loving Fathe
be matter of greater shame and grief than any afflict
on which you lie under: Though neither do I go abo
to perswade you to a Stoical Apathie, an utter insen
bleness of your outward losses and troubles; whilst y
have bodies, 'tis not to be expected, but you should
concerned for them, and feel some kind of resentme
agreeable to what befalls them: but yet these motio
and passions ought to be under the Command of
higher facultie, even sanctified Reason, whose office i
to moderate and subdue them so far as her power
tends. Wherefore that which I am advising you
this, that you would not let the sense of your pressure
overwhelm you, as to render you unfit for any duti
owe to God, or so as may speak you forgetful of th
greater grounds of contentedness and joy
Religion suggests, and all sincere Christians
about them. And that this advice may take
better effect, I shall particularlie shew what
of those grounds are, I mean, what reason you
quietlie and comfortablie to entertain the sharpest
pensations; and the serious consideration of these,
the like reasons, may by Gods blessing, prove an effe
al means for the attaining this frame of Spirit,
being both engagements and helps thereto. It may se
perhaps a needless labour to spend words upon
Theme, which is so frequentlie and largelie handled
many excellent Treatises wrote thereupon; upon w
account indeed I shall be the briefer, though having
opportunitie, something I was willing to say that m
suit particularlie to the present occasion. It may
appear unseasonable and superfluous to administer c
fort at this distance of time from the suffering: but
we know the effects of it are still present, perhaps

e encreasing; and I wish that the sorrows of those who eel them, do not answerablie continue and encrease, hich is that I would prevent, or however do something o confirm and fortifie their minds who are alreadie arived to any measure of peace and settlement; that they ay see how reasonable and becoming this their carrige is, and may now retain, and on all other the like ocasions, shew forth the same.

1. And to this purpose first, let me suggest what is ostusuallie insisted on by all that speak of this Subct; namely, that you would consider who is *the Author* ermissively at least) *of all the troubles that have com'n upon* , *even God himself.* And let not the commonness of truth make it of ever the less esteem with you, but ther the more it is inculcated, the deeper let it be imress upon your minds. Why should it be of less efficaie now than in *Davids* daies, who when he was *consumed y the blow of Gods hand, yet opened not his mouth because e did it?* Or in *Eli's* daies, who when he heard the reatnings denounc't against his Familie, answered, *It the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good?* Or in *Job's*, o when he had lost all, yet could calmlie say, *The Lord ve, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name the Lord.* How effectuallie then may this allay all e disturbances and tumults of your breast to remember, God had an hand in what hath befaln you? and dare your hearts rise against the operations of his hand? Whether you consider your selves more generallie related to God as his creatures, or more nearlie, as his people in Covenant with him through Christ, you will find your selves under strong and forcible obligations to this uty of submission upon many accounts.

Is not God your Maker, he who gave you a being, nd hath preserved hitherto? Is he not then the most roper and absolute owner both of you and all that you

have? And shall he not then do with you what he pleas
without your murmuring or contradiction? We that ar
now walking upon this earth, who a few daies since wer
nothing; that were brought upon this Stage of life an
action, by the will and power of a Being infinitelie a
bove us, without any contrivance of our own; had we
any libertie or capacitie of indenting with our Maker,
that we would not come into the world except on certain
terms, and on condition of such and such usage there?
The pot when it is turning on the wheel, might as well
compound with the Potter of what form, and for what
use it should be made. Fit then it is that we should be a
his finding and ordering, whose workmanship we ar
that we should as entirelie render up our selves to h
will, as we proceeded from it; not thinking wee ar
wrong'd if God dispose of us or ours without asking our
consent, any more than when he made us. Can he wrong
us who owes us nothing? who may without injustice turn
us into the Grave, or sentence us into our Primitive no
thingness? If he may thus take away life it self at his
pleasure, may he not do the same by all the comforts
it? That he lent them for any time was meer bountie
and is it injustice to withdraw them, or some part o
them, when he sees good? As the giving of life layeth
obligation upon him to continue it, no more doth his
bestowing of any outward mercies. If you had once re-
liev'd a man in want, that does not binde you to do so
alwaies: Or if you had freelie lent your friend an hun-
dred pound for one year, you are not thereby engag'd
to let him have it for ten or twentie, or to give it him
out-right. And do you think to plead prescription for a
ny of these enjoyments which were graciouslie lent you
by their owner for so long as he should think fit. Rather
methinks, you should dismiss them with thankfulness for
having had them so long, and that any thing is yet re
serv

ſerv'd you. We uſe not to account them either honeſt or good-natur'd, who are as angry with their friends when they call for what was lent, as if they came to rob them. You cannot think ſure, that when God put his gifts into your hands, he made them ſo abſolutelie yours, that he quit away his own right thereto, or his power to recall them. God charges it indeed upon the Jews, *Hoſ.* 2. 8. *that they knew not that he gave them their corn, wine and oil, and multiplied their ſilver and gold*; which they manifeſted by ſerving idols therewith, as they are there accus'd. And I wiſh this wilful ignorance was not ſtill common in the world, and the ſame evidence given of it, by men ſerving their pride and luxurie with thoſe good things which were allow'd to other purpoſes. Such, I confeſs, whoſe dependance is very little upon God for any thing they expect or need, who are not wont to look to heaven for earthlie things, (though for faſhion ſake they may uſe to ſay, *Give us this day our daily bread*) but place their chief confidence in their own ſubtil projects and undertakings; ſuch as theſe do little apprehend how their Eſtates are the Gift of God, but regard them rather as the meer fruits of their own wit or induſtry; and therefore think their proprietie in them ſo abſolute, that they are readie to accuſe God himſelf if he take them away, as if he dealt injuriouſlie with them. But you who believe that it is in vain to riſe earlie and ſit up late, without God give a bleſſing to your diligence, and have accordinglie had a chief reſpect to his Providence in all your waies, and received all your mercies as from his hand, will be far enough, I hope, from ſuch groſs miſtakes. If you ſhould ſend your Son or Servant as Factor beyond Sea, and maintain him there, and furniſh him with money for Trading, you would claim a right to the encreaſe he ſhould make of your Stock, and would take it for a ſorrie argument, if he

should keep it back, and tell you, it had now been so long in his hands, that it was not lawful for you to take it out. By this Rule the Steward might detain his Lords money, if possession conferr'd a right. And much less reason have you to imagine, that what you may for some while possess, is thereby alienated from him whose is *the earth and the fulness thereof*. 'Twas he who made that earth, and all those creatures, by the having of which men reckon themselves rich, and whilst they pass from the hands of one to another, they are nevertheless his; and therefore are men entrusted with what measure of them, and for what time he pleaseth, that they may improve them to his glorie, and when he pleases he calls them In. And thus in the nineth verse of the Chapter God threatens those inconsiderate, unthankful ones, to strip them of those his mercies which they abus'd. *Therefore* (saith he) *will I return and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wooll and my flax, given to cover her nakedness*. And shall not God have libertie to do what he will with his own? You that are Tenants at will, if your Landlord had warn'd you out of his house, would have prepar'd to be gone without contending? Or if for some reasons which he might not tell you of, he should have pluckt it down, you would scarce have thought your selves concern'd to quarrel with him for so doing since it was his own, who could hinder him? And will you not be as submissive to God whilst he executes his righteous pleasure? Your money, goods and houses were all his, more than yours who own'd them, or rather who had the keeping of them. Men indeed might not violate the right you had to them, but in opposition to God you had none; why then might he not burn them up, or dispose of them, as pleas'd him best? Even the earth, which for a while he hath given to the Sons of

Men

Men, to travel over it to Eternitie; he will ere long cast into flames, without doing any injurie, I hope, to the then Inhabitants of it: though one may perhaps cry out for his house, another for his Land, or his Plate and Jewels; which outcries, be they never so loud, are like to have no more regard than they have reason? And why may not God now deal with any part of this earth, as shortlie he will with the whole? And why may not we be as contented that he should? The same reason will also hold for our submission to Gods Providence, when he shall remove our Relations, our health, life, libertie, or any the like comfort, over all which his Dominion is absolute, and therefore his disposal ought to be acceptable. I might also farther shew how the wisdome, goodness, and other Attributes of God, engage us to the same dutie, but I am afraid of being tedious, and may have occasion to mention them hereafter.

But beside these reasons drawn from your common relation to God as your Creator and Soveraign Lord, you that are his peculiar people, to whom he is become a reconciled Father in his Son, may easilie discern many further engagements you lie under, patientlie to bear all the allotments of his Providence; but chieflie let me bring to your remembrance the tenour of that Covenant whereinto you were entred with God, when you solemnlie gave up your selves to him, and engaged to take him for your God. Did you herein capitulate with him for your usage on earth in any absolute way, that he should maintain you in health, wealth, and worldlie prosperitie? Did you list your selves into his service onlie on condition of being paid such and such wages, and living at such an easie delicate rate? Surelie a Christian at his New-Birth durst no more do thus, than man at his Creation was able to do it. Nay, did you not engage to the quite contrarie, that you would not in any thing be

your own chuſers, but leave your ſelves and all your concernments to Gods diſpoſing? how elſe could you take him for God, and your God? which, beſide other things, implies your acknowledgement of that Authoritie he hath over man in general, and your reſolution for your own part to ſubmit to it. And do you not contradict this when you would be your own Maſters, and find fault with any of his proceedings? For you have not onlie bound your ſelves to a ſincere endeavour to do what is enjoyned you, but alſo to be content with whatever ſhall be done with you. All the inſtances of the Divine Will, whether expreſt in his Commands, or in his Providences, you are therefore to imbrace and acquieſce in. And when you covenanted to do thus, I queſtion not but you were poſſeſt with the apprehenſions of Gods Soveraignie, all ſufficiencie, and gracious merciful nature, that you believed you could no better way conſult for your ſelves and the ſafetie of your affairs, than by putting all into his hands: And have you any reaſon to repent of your courſe, and change theſe apprehenſions? May it not adminiſter full ground of ſecuritie to conſider the glorious Attributes of God, and the nearneſs of his Relation to you? Shall not this even endear and make welcome what in ſelf ſeems rough and harſh, that it comes from the hand of a loving and good God? We find how our bleſſed Lord made uſe of this conſideration, *The Cup which my Father hath given me, ſhall I not drink it?* Shall Children take any thing amiſs from their tender and indulgent Parents? Have they the leaſt reaſon to fear that they will contrive their miſchief? Earthlie Parents indeed may through their indiſcretion and exceſſive fondneſs bring ruine upon their Children, whilſt they are ſtudying how to do them good, or through their weakneſs may not be able to keep it off them: But how vain and unreaſonable are theſe fears in you, that have their

finitelie

finitelie wise and Almightie God for your Father? Can you imagine that ever his Providence should do you hurt? Certainlie if you harbour any such false and unworthie conceit, it proceeds from some gross mistake of your own interest, and the nature of things. And this leads me to a second consideration, which I desire you to weigh seriouslie and impartiallie, and not let sense, and carnal reason, and the common Opinions of an inconsiderate multitude, sway with you against the greatest and most apparent truth.

2. Namelie, That if we speak distinctlie and properlie, *You have received little or no hurt by all those seemingly ill things that have befallen you:* By your sufferings in themselves you are not worsted, nor are the poorer for the losses that you have sustained. 'Tis probable, this may at the first sight seem a very great Paradox, and a flourish of Rhetorick, too weak to perswade or satisfie those who can fetch demonstrations from their sight and feeling to the contrarie: For them that a while since had houses, and shops well furnisht, quick trading, good credit and money at command, now to have emptie purses, little respect, and perhaps scarce a place to put their heads in: Is there no hurt in all this? This is hard to be apprehended by those that have met with such a change. But if, notwithstanding the strangeness of this Assertion, I shall evince it to be undoubtedlie true, I hope you will, laying aside all prejudice, entertain and improve it according to its usefulness and importance. Why should it not be as welcome tidings to you to hear, that you have received no damage (or none that's considerable) if it prove true, as it would be to hear how you might recover what's lost, in a way that would satisfie sense it self? And if you be once convinc't that no hurt is done you by the hand of God, I hope you will easilie be perswaded not to complain of it: And I must confess, except

cept you are in some measure convinc't of this, I cannot well see what it is should keep you from complaining, or a disposition to it. All that is said of Gods Dominion over his creatures, and his right and power to do with them what he please, may make men understand that it is to no purpose to resist a will and strength so much above their own, but will not be sufficient to beget in them an hearty submission to it, nor will bring them to think well of God, and take any complacencie in him when-ever he shall make them smart, whilst they have a conceit that hereby he ruines and undoes them: Nay, perhaps it may encrease both their rage and torment, to consider how impossible it is for them to help themselves. But such, as upon right apprehensions of the true happiness of Man, see plainlie that no afflictive Dispensations do prejudice or impair it, they and they onlie will be enabled to receive them without quarrelling and repining at the Author: And that upon this account you may be possest of so good a temper, (which is that I am now perswading you to) it will be needful to represent what those right apprehensions are which are here of so great necessitie and use. For when we call to mind what it is that is the chief and only good of man, we shall the better understand what is hurtful to him. Now in one word, mans happiness consists in his conformitie to God, or in his Communion with him; (which seems the same thing, or a necessarie consequence of it) that is to say, in his being made as like to God in all imitable perfections as his Nature is capable; in framing all his motions, and guiding his actions by those rules which God hath prescribed; and in reaching to that knowledge, love and enjoyment of God, for which his reasonable faculties were given him, and are suited. This is the proper formal happiness of Humane Nature, which is begun on earth, perfected and compleated in heaven: Here-

in the bud, and is call'd Grace; hereafter it is in the flower and fruit, and is call'd Glory. I speak to Christians who believe they have immortal Souls, and that all is true which Scripture speaks concerning them, and therefore the suppoſition of your Faith, may well excuſe mee from any laborious proof of a Truth ſo fundamental to Religion, and ſo plainlie revealed in Gods holie Word.

If God be the moſt perfect Being, then to reſemble him is our greateſt Perfection: If his wiſdome, power, and benignity be ſuch, that he created man in an happy ſtate, ſet him upon, and deſign'd him for a bleſſed employment and end; then to comply with his will, living in that manner, and to that purpoſe for which we were created, is our greateſt intereſt: And if God be the beſt of Beings, then to have our ſouls fitted for, and rais'd to the fruition of him, is our higheſt felicity. From this way was we fell by ſin, and to this it is the Office and deſign of Chriſt the Redeemer, and the work of his Spirit, to recover and reſtore us. The intent of his undertaking, was not to purchaſe for us riches, eaſe, or honours, but to repair our decaied natures, and renew us after the image of God, which we had defac'd, and ſo to qualifie us for, and bring us into his ſervice and favour. Only it is to be conſidered, that whil'ſt man is in this earthly ſtate, emploid in the ſervice of his maker, and getting fitter for the higher glory, he hath a body that ſtands in need of outward ſupports and comforts; as food and raiment, houſe and lodging, and ſuch like conveniencies: but yet his happineſs, which is that I before mentioned, depends not upon his continuance in this body, nor upon its proſperity whil'ſt he is in it: Let what will befall the body, our caſe is good whil'ſt the ſoul proſpers, and is conſtant and regular in thoſe duties that are proper to the preſent ſtate. Nay further, riches, health,

and

and all manner of bodily accommodations, are no further to be reckoned good for a man, than as they help on his higher spiritual good, as by them we are supported whil'st wee are serving God, and as wee emploie them to his Glorie, by putting them to those several good uses which he hath appointed us. By this time, I hope, you apprehend what it is I drive at, namelie, to manifest how inconsiderable your losses are, that you may value them accordinglie. You see of what nature, and in what rank those things are which you have parted with, at what a great distance they stand from your happiness, and how little reference they have thereto: And that whether you consider your happiness as now begun, or as you are in the way to it hereafter to be enjoied. If even here on earth, the good man who lives in the fear and love of his Maker, bee the only happie man, what then are you the unhappier for having lost some, yea, suppose it were all of those worldly things you possest? And what reason have you to complain or grieve? what, I hope, you have lost nothing of God, nor the Graces of his Spirit, wherewith you were inricht; nothing of your Spiritual wisdome and affections, of your faith, and love, and zeal for his Glorie: These Goods, I hope, are unburnt. It was not sure in the power of the flames, as raging as they were, to reach to your souls, and burn up their furniture: That which was *Gods building* within you is not consum'd, nor his image upon you defac't. And if your choisest treasures, the having of which can alone enrich you, be sav'd, may you not with much ease let go your lumber, of a far less value? Are you not still as holie, humble, and heavenlie as ever you were? And if so, I dare affirm it, you are never the worse for all your losses. What a wretched creature else would you make man, if his happiness hung as loose about him, as his riches and all external things do? This would seem to

blemish

blemish the Divine Providence, as if he had put the affairs of man, the noblest of all inferiour Beings, into no better a state than of a Bruit, nay, worse by far: For as his earthly enjoiments are of a much greater extent, so would he be more obnoxious to hurts and dangers. 'Tis peculiar to him to be concern'd for an estate, for reputation, for Wives and Children, &c. and if to be depriv'd of these would undo him, then the waves might swallow up his happiness, and Thieves rob him of it, fire, and many other accidents consume it. The slanderer might blast it, sickness prey upon it, and the grave burie it; and which seems worse than all the rest, our lives would be a continual torment, upon apprehension of the uncertainie of these things, and through the fore-thoughts and fears of being stript of them, when as a Bruit is free from these fears, and from most of the evils that occasion them: Moreover, men would hence bee drawn to think, that the blessed God hath dealt enviously and sparinglie with his creatures, in that neither all, nor the most are capable of rising to be happie, if it consist in wealth, honors and the like: Wherefore, they to whom they were never given, or from whom they are at any time taken, wil be enclin'd to hard and evil thoughts of God, whose Providence thus orders the course of things. But blessed be our heavenlie Father, he hath dealt more bounteouslie with us than so, and hath not cast us into any such necessitie of being miserable, through discontentedness with our portion and reluctancie against his will; but hath made our happiness of that nature, that whoever is trulie willing may reach to it, and none can he depriv'd of it against his will; which is a priviledge wherein no creature on earth, beside man, is a sharer. 'Tis nothing else but wickedness, which is alwaies a wilful thing, that can possibly hurt us. All afflictions be they never so sharp, do but race our skin, not pierce our souls. They do but at the

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most break the Cabinet, the Jewel is safe and whole? When as the effects of sin are like those of lightning, secret, but most certainly pernicious, melting the Sword, whil'st the Scabbard's untoucht, breaking the bone, whil'st the flesh is unchang'd, thus doth it destroy the soul, whil'st the body seems to remain in good plight. Every creature hath some such perfections proper to its own nature, that the having thereof causeth them to be reputed good, as being agreeable to their own kinde, and fit for that use they are design'd to. Thus the Horse that hath strength or swiftness, fitting him for the service hee is put to, is a good Horse; and though sometimes he may be set out with a fine Saddle, and gaudy Trappings, yet he's never the worse, if considered as an Horse, when these are taken off him: And no more is a man for the loss of any external things which belong to him, since it is not in these that his excellencie, as hee is a man, consists, nor was that the end of his Creation, that he might enjoy them. What, does it add any thing to his real proper worth, to be cloath'd in gorgeous and costly array, or to have store of monie lying in his chests, or to live in a brave house, with a deal of pomp and attendance, fare deliciously everie day, having high titles and honours confer'd upon him? What's all this to the worth of the man? These tell what he has, not what he is. His cloaths and his house, and monie may bee good, whil'st hee himself is stark naught. Such things as these, which are here to day, and gone to morrow, and are of so little reference to him whil'st they stay, can they better or advance him? without question they cannot. For shall wee not finde those who abounded with them, having nothing else to commend them, term'd no better, in the language of Scripture, than Dogs and Swine, such to whom the societie and portion of Devils is threatned and allotted? When as holy men, though destitute of all the

ornaments, by the ſentence of God himſelf, who beſt knows the worth of his creatures, are ſtiled happy, honourable, bleſſed, and the only excellent ones upon earth. And if Holineſs be the peculiar excellency of the reaſonable creature, then the loſs of this only is his ruine; as your horſe or any other beaſt, is then ſpoiled when he hath loſt his ability for ſervice; and as the loſs of limbs or life is the deſtruction of the body: Even thus doth ſin, where it hath its full force and operation, wound and murder the ſoul ſo far as it's capable of dying: For the death of the Soul, is its final departure from God, and it's enmitie againſt him, which is far worſe than any other death or annihilation that can befall it, as wee may underſtand even by the body it ſelf, for which to draw out life upon the wrack, or in any ſuch like torments, is worſe than to be ſlain out-right: and that miſerable life may moſt properlie be call'd a lingring death, according to the ſaying, *vita non eſt vivere ſed valere.* But it is no croſſes nor loſſes, nor any thing that lights upon what is without the ſoul that can inflict this miſerie upon it; nothing, I ſay, but its voluntary declining from that holy ſtate, wherein God would have it live, to the ſordid ſenſuall waies of wickedneſs. May we not fitly allude to the words of Chriſt, concerning that which defiles the man. *Mark 7. 15. There is nothing from without a man, that entring into him, can defile him: But the things which come out of him, thoſe are they which defile the man.* And moſt demonſtrative is the reaſon there given, *verſ. 19. Becauſe what he receives from without, entreth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats.* So neither can affliction endamage the ſoul, ſince it enters not into it, but falls upon ſome external thing, and ſo ſlides away. But thoſe evil things which come from within, ſuch as are inſtanc't in *verſe 21, 22. Evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, theefts, covetouſneſs,*

buſneſs, theſe defile the man: And theſe are the thing which deſtroy him; for the defilement of the ſoul is deſtruction. Take it, Sirs, for a moſt unqueſtionable truth, that to have an exceſſive love for worldly things, is much more hurtful than not to have the things themſelves; to burn in ſuch inordinate affections to them is worſe for you by far, than to have them all burnt up: for this latter is but like the firing of ſome poor Cottage and out-buildings, which in time of war is oft done, on purpoſe for the defence and ſafety of the fortified City; when as the former is like a fire which the Enemy hath kindled in the very heart of the City it ſelf.

Since then your chief happineſs, as you are men and Chriſtians, is plac't ſo far out of the Sphere and hurtful influence of all external accidents, that the worſt that them can do no more to leſſen or interrupt it, how unreaſonable is it to be much dejected for but a little grievance? Or what a ſordid ſpirit is that man who ſhould lament the loſs of his dung, or ſome ſorry triſle, while his houſe is well fill'd with goods, and his Coffers with money? And no more reaſon hath he to be caſt down for having his hands emptied of all his earthlie ſubſtance, whoſe heart is fill'd with the more ſubſtantial heavenly Treaſure of Grace and Goodneſs.

Yet after all, I am afraid leaſt moſt of my Readers ſhould take what I have ſaid for meer Notions, not fit to be framed into Principles, to guide them in their practiſe, and in their judgements of things. Hardlie will men be perſwaded that *riches*, the *Diana* whom not any particular Country onlie, but the whole world worſhippeth, who may number more Votaries and Martyrs than the true God; that theſe are of ſo little conſequence, and ſo little conducing to make a man happie. But yet I may well hope for better entertainment from you that have been enlightned to behold ſuch a beautie and glorie in

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ſpiritual things, as hath in ſome good meaſure abated your eſteem of all things elſe. And the better yet to clear and ſettle your apprehenſions, I would deſire you but attentlie to conſider your own Nature, whether you bear not ſomething about you better than fleſh and blood, and whether the gratifying and advancing of this Nobleſt part be not moſt your intereſt; and how far earthlie things, which are of a nature ſo diſtant from it, can be ſerviceable to this end? Conſider moreover, what that is which you muſt live upon for ever, and then think whether ſuch kind of attainments as make the neareſt approach thereto, and are the very beginning of it, ought not rather to be ſtil'd your happineſs, than ſuch as are quite of another kind, and will then be whollie uſeleſs. Conſider alſo what kind of men they are to whom ordinarilie the largeſt ſhare of theſe things is allotted; how Infidels, Idolaters, and the profaneſt wretches abound therewith; and remember how little of them Chriſt himſelf, and his moſt Nobleſt Followers enjoyed; and yet hear what *Paul* in the name of the reſt tells us, That whilſt they were as poor, they made many rich; whilſt they ſeemed to have nothing, they poſſeſt all things, 2 *Cor*. 6. 10. Think what were the *riches* they conferr'd, and what were the *all things* they poſſeſt, and ſee whether they confirm not what I have ſaid. Furthermore, obſerve what language Scripture gives to theſe things, as they would be any part of mans felicity, and how little regard it commands us to have for them. Call to mind alſo what you uſe to call them your ſelves in your prayers and ſerious diſcourſe, *ſhadows*, *traſh*, *bubbles*, and *vanity*; and I would hope you think of them as you ſpeak, and will be affected towards them but as ſuch things deſerve. And laſtly, take notice what their greateſt lovers think and ſay of them, when they have had

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the best they could get, and are about to leave them. Lay but all these considerations together, which for brevitie sake I only mention, and argue thence how little of true happiness consists in the having of them, and how little hurt is done, and therefore how little cause of mourning given by their removal.

And let me farther add, as very Notions as these may seem, whoever he be that is not so thorowlie perswaded of their truth as to frame his apprehensions, and regulate his affections conformablie thereto, is never ordinarilie like to live any other than an unquiet, discontented, and therefore miserable life, be it little or much that he hath. 'Tis a most true saying of an excellent Heathen Moralist, that there are punishments, as it were, by an irreversible Law, appointed for those, who in a contradiction to the Divine Order and establishment of things, conceive too great an Opinion and love for any worldly matters, which punishments arise out of the very bowels of their vicious affections: For such (saith he) shall be envious, covetous flatterers; they shall be cast into inward disturbances, and break out into womanish lamentations. And was it needful, I might shew by many instances out of some of the most rational and sober Heathens, that they by the very light of Nature and strength of reason, discovered as much as I have asserted, that Humane Felicity depends not upon things external. Though I confess few of them (so far as I can learn) could tell much of our future perfect happiness, and therefore wanted sufficient Motives to recommend a contempt of the world, and the like difficult duties to their hearers: This they left for Christianity to do, which hath fully done it, revealing to us a state of Eternal Bliss purchast by Jesus Christ for all his faithful servants; whence I may afterward particularly fetch ground of comfort.

But you may remember I told you, that if you consider your selves as in the way to this glory, your affairs are in never the worse posture; taking your present happiness to consist in working out your salvation, in getting meet for, and making sure of the Heavenly Inheritance (as indeed it does) it's no whit prejudiced by the troubles you have undergone. And this plainly appears from what hath been said before: If you have lost nothing of your Grace, you are never the farther from Glorie: If that be but secure, as small a stock as you have left you of other goods, you may drive on as quick a Trade for Heaven as ever. You have lost nothing of all that whereby you might purchase the favour of God, or an entrance into the *Kingdome he hath prepared*: for it was not for the rich, and honourable, and prosperous, (as such) but for those that *love him* that he hath *prepared it*. We read, *Psa.* 147. 10. *That God delights not in the strength of an horse, nor takes pleasure in the legs of a man.* No more doth he in any other external accomplishment; he regards you never the more for your wit or beauty, your wealth or dignity; but *Ver.* 11. *He takes pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.* You may still come as freely and boldly to him as ever, and may find as hearty welcome. Some that once seem'd your friends, perhaps may now grow strange, and make shie of you, for fear you should trouble them; but be of good chear, your God will not deal with you thus, *whom he loves, he loves to the end.* He that chose you, not because you were rich, will not reject you for being poor. The Lord of Glory, your dear Saviour and Husband, will not repent nor be ashamed of your Alliance, for any meanness that you may be reduc't to; he judges not as man does; nay, 'tis the mean and despised ones of the world for whom ordinarily he hath the most tender regard; *Not many Mighty, not many Noble are called*; but

he hath chose the poor of this world rich in faith, heirs of the Kingdome. Neither Grace nor Glory are set to sale for such things as the poor cannot bring as well as the rich. The Romish Usurper, with his gaping Officers, may do it, but Christ never will, nor hath he warranted them thereto, or promised to stand to their bargains: He invites all without money or price to fetch his milk and wine. You know what a terrible rebuke *Simon Magus* had for thinking the gift of God might be purchased with money: It was something more precious than silver and gold that purchaft the incorruptible and never-fading inheritance; be sure then a part in it is not to be bought with any such base things. A willing, thankful acceptance of it, as the greatest blessing that can be bestowed, is the great condition on your part required; this is your *selling all for that Pearl of Price:* And 'tis long of something worse than poverty, if any man have not this. Next I bid you remember that your money is no current Coin in the other world, nor would bestead you any thing there. The Judicature erected in the Heavens admits neither of bribes nor fees. Get a good Cause and you are well enough, but without that all the Gold in the *Indies* can neither purchase a Pardon, nor a Reprieve; there will then be no distinction betwixt the rich and the poor, the Honourable and the mean; all the difference that is made will be betwixt the godly and the ungodly, who shall accordingly be disposed to the right hand or the left, to blessedness or woe. And if all this be so (as there is nothing more certain) how little reason have you to judge your selves in a worse state than formerly, or to grieve as if you were so? What, Sirs, is this nothing in your esteem, that you may have access to God as readily, and hear from him as frequently, and converse with him as intimately and lovingly as ever you did, and have the same liberty for transacting with him the great af-

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fairs of your Immortal Souls? Is this nothing, did I say; nay, is not this in a manner all? Does not this priviledge which is yet continued, contain in it all others that are any whit considerable? In that you may still pursue the great business of your lives as advantageously as ever, and carry on all your designs upon the Cœlestial Kingdome with as good success. If indeed you had been sent into the world to gather wealth, and leave it to your Children; that you might raise great families which should flourish when you were dead and gone, you had now been sadly cast back, and little better than quite broke; and 'tis no wonder if they take themselves to be so who made this their chief end. But if your business here be, to glorifie and please him that created and redeemed you, by an holy fruitful conversation, and to get your souls prepar'd for an higher bliss, (which I hope you question not but it is) then, I say, you may follow it on with as much courage, and to as good purpose, as ever formerly you did, without check or hindrance by this or any the like disaster. Now what a ridiculous thing would it be accounted, for a General to be daunted for the loss of a few straggling Souldiers, whilst the Main Body of his Army, and all things necessary to carry on the War, are still secure? Or for a Marriner to stand weeping for having his Ship somewhat weather-beaten and defac't, as to its painting and fineness, whilst it's still as sufficient and well-fitted for his Voyage as before? Or for a rich Merchant to lament some such trivial loss as is scarce miss out of his stock, nor is any hindrance to his great Trading? Why then should the sincere Christian be so deeply affected with those occurrences which need be no let to him in his journey, and which leave him never the less capable of mannaging his chiefest Trade for invisible durable riches? So that, I hope, I have clear'd the truth of my Position, past all denial or doubting, and

have made it to appear, that you have receiv'd no considerable disadvantage by any effects of the Fire; and therefore it is a very reasonable exhortation, that your sorrow should bear proportion to the ground of it, and not be excessive, when you have no cause, nor can shew any reason, why it should be so.

But it's probable there may arise some such Objections in your breast, as may somewhat delay your firmer assent to what is said; two or three of which I shall mention, and endeavour to take out of your way, and so hasten to the next.

Obj. 1. Some may think with themselves, *If this be indeed so, that the loss of an estate is a matter of so small importance, how comes it to pass then, that men bear it so heavily? Surely all are not Children and Fools, to mourn for the losing of Pins or Counters, wherefore, how can we but think the things they lose of more worth than so, except we will excuse the generality of men of extream Childishnesse and Folly?*

If this stick any thing with you, for your satisfaction, I would in one word advise you, soberly to consider all that hath been said, to evince how very little, or just nothing, a great estate contributes to the happiness of man: and if you can indeed make it out to your own impartial thoughts, that this assertion is false, and the arguments brought to prove it fallacious, and can manifest the contrary by stronger reasons, you shall have my free consent to reject it: But if you are not able to do thus, nor can rationally contradict the former discourse, judge your selves, whether the example even of the most, of the greatest, or of those whom the world counts the wisest, ought to weaken your assent to a plain, undeniable truth. I affirm nothing but what the Word of God himself, the Professions of all Christians, the strictest Reason, and the Writings of wisest Heathens will

ry well warrant, and the convictions of almost all, one time or other, yield a suffrage to: What then have we to do with the examples of frail men, under the power of their passions, how many soever they be? May I not with as much reason demand, If it be true what *Solomon* saies of the vanity of all the worldlings Idols; and what *David* saies, that men *disquiet themselves in vain, whil'st they are heaping up riches*; and what a greater than either, even our Lord himself, tells us, *That our life consists not in the abundance of those things which we possess*; how then it comes to pass, that the most are so eager and insatiable in their desires after them, so constant and unwearied in their labours to attain them? Is this because God and good men speak worse of the world than it deserves? Or because the most are careless and inconsiderate, and think better of it than it is, pursuing the common course, without examining the reason, or foreseeing the end of it? and so in a blinde zeal, making that their Idol which they see so many adore; they follow it with the same care and love, as if it was indeed their God and happiness: which I know you'l grant to bee a very gross mistake; And yet, as bad as it is, from this very same mistake, proceeds that unseemly and excessive sorrow, which you behold in those from whom the things of the world are withdrawn. Whil'st they kept them, they let out their hearts upon, and rejoyc't in them, and even blest themselves in their enjoyment of them, as if they would abide with them, and make them happy for ever: How then can it otherwise bee, but that when they are remov'd, they should wring their hands and tear their hearts with grief, as being depriv'd of that in the fruition, whereof they took all the satisfaction and joy they had, and from which they had expectations of something better than ever yet they had found? Who, that is of these carnal principles, can possibly bear up under

the interruption of this comfort, the fruſtration of theſe hopes? Yet this weak carriage of theirs, tells us not what the worth of the world was, but what kinde of falſe apprehenſions they had of it, and how great a dependance they had upon it. Though it bee but an Idol that's carried away, yet if *Micah* have taken it for his God, what wonder if he follow after the men who ſpoil him of it, with a deal of lamentation and noiſe, from which he would never ceaſe, but that *he perceives they are too ſtrong for him*, *Judge* 18.24, 26. Even theſe are ſome of thoſe *ſorrows* with which, the Apoſtle tells us, *they that covet after money, do pierce themſelves thorough.*

But perhaps you'l tell me, that not only the covetous who are Idolaters, but even good men themſelves ſeem very unable to bear the loſing or leſſening of their eſtates, and are more concern'd for them, than if they were of no greater value than I ſpeak of, and therefore hence you conclude, that it's warrantable, or however unavoidable, to have a deeper ſenſe of their departure than I ſeem to allow.

To which I anſwer,

(1) It is not the example of men, what ever they be, but the Word of God, that muſt bee your direction and rule to guide you in all your apprehenſions and behaviour: And you know well enough what this tells you of the World, and how you ought to ſtand affected to it, whether it ſmile or frown; that you ſhould not, when *riches encreaſe, ſet your hearts upon them*, leaſt when they waſte, your comfort ſhould do ſo too. And

(2) Since you inſiſt on example, how many inſtances doth Scripture afford of good men, who arriv'd to ſuch a conſtancie of minde, and indifferencie to all worldly concerns, that no varietie of eſtate, no croſſes therein could ſhake or much diſturb them? *David* when in a far worſe condition, in all appearance, than you

re reduc't to, even when *Ziklag*, the City where hee welt, was burnt, his Goods and his Wives taken by the nemy; and more than all this, the people spake of oning him, yet when he was thus *greatly distressed, he ncouraged himself in the Lord his God.* So *Job* when he as not only depriv'd of his possessions, but his Chil-ren too; yet from a consideration, that the same God ho had taken away, first gave him all, and that hee ust return naked to the Grave, as he came out of the Vomb, calmlie concludes with *Blessed be the name of the ord.* And if hee afterwards discovered any touch of patience, it was when many other afflictions besides s povertie lay hard upon him, and embittered his spi-t. Does not *Paul* also tell us, that hee had *learnt to ant as well as to abound, and in what ever state he was, there-ith to be content?* And that wee might not only admire is excellent frame in him', but rise up to it our selves; e tells us how he came by it, *through Christ strengthning im*, it was, that he *could do all these things.* Others we ead of, that took *joyfully the spoiling of their Goods*, count-ng all things but dross and dung so they might win Christ. nd Church History makes mention of multitudes of allant Spirits, both in the Primitive and latter times, hat manifested the same low esteem of the World. And f they could take it joyfully, to have their Goods spoil'd or Gods sake, may not you take it patiently to have them poil'd by his hand? For may not their examples, who were o famous for their holiness and wisdome, best inform ou of what value the world is, and convince you, that his patience and indifferency of minde, which I am ressing upon you, is no impossible thing. Lastly, Grant-g that you see some, who may yet bee good men or the main, that by their carriage contradict these ex-mples, yet may I not take liberty to say, that this is ut a defect of their goodness, and therefore no way fit

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for your imitation. If *David* himself begin to h
hard thoughts of God, as if he had forgotten him, he
quickly correct himself, and acknowledge, *This*
Infirmity, *Psal.* 77. 10. The plain truth is, the beli
too prone to be influenc't upon, by the common co
of the multitude about them, and being but a few,
hardly bear up against the mighty stream of popular
nions, and corrupt practices that flow from them;
are ready to be born down, as men that are overpow
by a far greater number of contrary voices. So
partly from examples without, and partly from the
inclinations of a carnal principle within, not wholly
dued, many even of the better sort, *walk like men*, to
the Apostles phrase, and hastily take up some of th
rules whereby the common sort are guided, without
strict examination which in such matters is requisite.
therefore having too much the same conceits of rich
ease, and reputation in the world, that their co
Neighbours have, when they meet with any cross in th
things, they shew their weakness in grieving much
as others do. Though, blessed be God, these very times
bad as they are, yeild us, I hope, many instances of
who are arriv'd to a more exalted and Christian
Spirit. But what if there were fewer, yea, none suc
what ground have you to plead against your duty? wh
you are perswaded to nothing but what is possible, w
is reasonable and highly advantageous, as I may shew
non. Wherefore labour with all your might, to di
your selves of all those false opinions, which your l
and daily converse with a multitude of ignorant, wor
ly men may have possest you with, and too deeply
ed you in. Especially beware of esteeming *God*
Evil, according to their reckoning: for mistakes h
will produce a world of inconveniencies, and unavoi
bly cast you into great perplexities and disorders,

nce you think every thing to bee *Good* for you, which leaseth the flesh, and that to be *Evil*, which makes it mart, or any way crosseth its interest (which is the judgement of the most) it's next to impossible that you should pass your lives with any true peace and quiet. And truly, they that will be foolish and miserable, because they see the most are so, as they are very little capable of Counsel, so they do as little deserve pitty.

Object. 2. But again some may say, *That they are now brought to such straits, that of necessity they must follow their callings more closely than they were wont, and so have not the same leisure for the Service of God, nor are so capable of doing works of charity as formerly, and therefore they cannot but think themselves in a much worse condition by this Calamity?*

To which I answer, Your greatest business and interest, is to comport with the Providence of God, in that state and condition wherein hee sees fit to place you, and to perform the duty proper to that estate. And therefore as to your necessity of diligent labour, you need not be griev'd at it: For

(1) So far as God hath made it necessary, and so far as you are taken up therewith, to that end, and in that manner which hee hath appointed, even these your labours shall bee an acceptable Service to him.

(2) Doth he require of you any such Attendance upon the duties of Religion, as is ordinarily inconsistent with your lawful and necessary callings. It is no more the duty of a poor man to spend so much time in hearing, reading, or praying, as would hinder him for providing for his Family, than it is of a sick man to bee so much exercised therein, as would endanger his life.

(3) May not the diligence you are put upon in your employments, prove an advantage to you, in securing you from idleness, and the temptations and mischiefs that are begotten by it?

(4) How-

4. However you are not hereby disabled for the great est and most substantial vital duties of Religion: Though you should not have time to hear or read so much formerly, yet, I hope, you may love God and your Brother as much as ever; and be as much in the exercise of faith, patience, humility, and all other graces of the Spirit; and in these it is, the Life of Religion most of all lies.

And lastly, see that you do but keep up your hearts and affections for external duties, and you will find yourselves not so straitned of time, be your imployments what they will; but you will have leisure for the performance of them so far as God hath engaged you thereto; nor shall you find this performance any such hinderance to your businesse in the world, as carnal men are wont to imagine. Keep your hearts heavenly, and earthly imployments will be no prejudice to you; spend not time idlely, and you may redeem time for Gods service, without any prejudice to your imployments.

And as for your incapacity of relieving the necessitous, the same answer in a manner may shew, that neither upon this account have you much ground of trouble.

For 1. So far as God by his Providence hath disabled you for works of Charity, he requires them not at your hands, nor will blame you for not doing them, no more than a lame man shall be blamed for not walking.

2. Every condition hath its proper duty, and your contentednes in a low estate will be as acceptable to God, as your liberality when in an higher, and more plentiful.

3. You may, notwithstanding your poverty, maintain a charitable spirit: your heart may be as large, though your estate is not; and if it be so, you shall be nevertheless regarded nor rewarded by God. What we re-

in the Gospel of the Widows Mite, may inform us, that they who do what they are able, and earnestly desire to do more, shall be reckoned amongst the greatest Benefactors, and dealt with as such; otherwise it would go ill with the best of men, since a *Peter* himself may sometimes truly say, *Silver and Gold have I none.*

3. You had need to look well to your hearts that they deceive you not in this case; for so much of discontent as you find in the absence of riches, so much selfishness there is in the desire of them, since that proceeds rather from a love to the things themselves, than from any mind to glorifie God with them. For if this be that you aim at, why do you not glorifie him by acquiescing in his Providence that hath remov'd them? You may best discover this, by reflecting upon your carriage in the daies of your prosperity; for they who did not then improve their Estates for God, desire them back again, its to be fear'd, for their own ends rather than his glory; but if you were so wise as to *honour God with your substance* whilst you enjoyed it, this may be abundant ground of satisfaction to you in the want of it.

For 4. You are to consider that you are but Stewards of the gifts of God, whose business it is to keep a faithful account, and make a diligent improvement of whatever Talents you receive; and therefore you must wholly leave it to your Lords pleasure what you shall have, and how long it shall remain in your hands: Why should a servant be concern'd how much stock his Master allows him to Trade with? Be it little or much, what's the difference to him, so he be but careful and faithful in that he's entrusted with? Nay, lastly, if in good earnest you regard your selves but as Stewards of all you possess, that must be accountable for the same, methinks it should be but little trouble to you to have your charge and burden lessened. Certainly its easier to give an account

count of a small Estate than a great one, whatever men may think of the matter. And though we should refuse no pains for our Masters service, yet so far as he thinks fit to ease us, we have no reason to be displeased at it.

Object. 3. Some again may tell me (which is the last Objection I shall here take notice of) *That the afflictions they have met with, have occasioned their repining and discontent, and cast them into great despondencies and distrusts, and therefore* (according to my own arguing) *have been exceeding hurtful to them, and given them very great cause of sadness.*

In answer whereto: 1. I grant, that sin indeed does hurt to any soul where its entertain'd, and brings along with it just ground of sorrow: and so far as you have given way to sinful passions, you have cause for humiliation, which you are chiefly to manifest, by endeavouring to repel and banish them from your breast, and not go on overwhelming your selves with one grief after another, upon pretence of repenting for the former.

2. But pray you see that you pass your Censure right, and then you'l easily find, that it is not of God's dealings with you, but of your own unsuitable carriage under them, that you have ground to complain. Whatever distempers of mind you have been cast into, they have not so much proceeded from any outward cause, as from your own weakness and misapprehensions, otherwise the same cause would produce the same effect in all: but you know there are many instances of such who have undergone more than ever you did, without any such disturbances in their breasts, or irregularity in their behaviour.

Yea, lastly, So far have Gods Providences been from causing the distempers which may now appear, that they have rather tended to their removal, by discovering the

hich were bred before, but lay more secret and un-
seerned till this occasion. You will not say, that the
ouchstone makes the Gold bad, whilst it shews that is
: Nor do wars and dangers make men Cowards, but
anifest some to be such. In time of prosperity the heart
en secretly cleaves to the Creature, and yet is scarce
spected to do so, but when adversity comes and be-
aves it of its Darlings, then doth this immoderate
e break out into immoderate grief; as change of
r sometimes stirs up those humors which before lay
l in the body. Whilst the world was flowing in upon
, those spiritual distempers were hatcht and nou-
t, which may most of all shew themselves upon its
ing out. The excess of Creature-love (which posses-
h us sooneſt when the World smiles most upon us) is
t corrupt Fountain whence those many bitter streams
unruly passions flow, as love to God is the Source
d Spring of all other holy affections. Fitly may it
said of you that stand mourning over the Funerals of
ward comforts, what the *Jews* said of Christ when he
pt over *Lazarus*'s Grave, *Behold how they loved them.*
d indeed the love we bear to children or friends, is
dome so much felt or expreſt as at their Funerals.

The bitter and passionate lamentations which *David*
kes for *Absalom*, 2 *Sam.* 18. 33. do very plainly re-
al what kind of affections he had for him. But now
as not *Absaloms* death, nor *Joabs* hand that slew him,
ch less the Providence that permitted both, which was
be accus'd as the cause of all this sorrow, but his own
dness which he had formerly contracted for this beau-
l Son; for when this was away, he could bear the
th of a Childe with another kind of manliness: It
s not then, *Oh my Son, my Son, would God I had died for*
, &c. But *now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I*
ng him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not re-
turn

turn to me, 2 *Sam.* 12. 23. Since then this breaking [of] the corruptions you complain of, does but shew [what] was before in your hearts, may you not look upon [it] an advantage to have such an insight into your selves ([I] shall shew anon) and so entertain the Providence [that] hath helpt you to it, rather with thankfulness than [murmuring], making so good an improvement thereof as [it] fitted and designed for.

3. But this brings me to a third Consideration, [which] may work you to a very willing submission to what [God] hath laid upon you, in that, if you are not wanting [to] your selves, *your afflictions may be so far from doing you* [hurt] *that they may very much conduce to your good.* And if [it] be so, it will be found most unreasonable for you to [entertain] them with heaviness and discontent. What would [you] think of that man who should entertain courtesies [with] repining at his Benefactor? Now that afflictions in general are capable of being beneficial to those that are exercised with them, is most commonly inculcated [and] acknowledged, and may appear very plain to any [one] do but consider the express promise of God, *That* [all] *things shall work together for good to those that love* [him]. And the experience of Saints in former times, who [have] left it upon Record, that it was *good for them to be afflicted.* Moreover, they are pronounced *blessed whom the Lord chasteneth, and teacheth out of his Law.* We are told [that] he *chastiseth every Son whom he loveth*, and that *for their profit*, *Heb.* 12. 6. 10. Yea, had we nothing else to guide us but our knowledge of the infinite wisdome and goodness of God, we might hence certainly and safely conclude that in all his dealings with his people he intends their advantage. Hath any thing happened to you but what came from his will who is goodness it self, and who is ever doing good to such as are in Covenant with him? You may be sure, he envies you not your enjoyments;

took them away as being too good for you, but as having ſomething better to beſtow in their room: Wherefore, although you could not at preſent diſcern what thoſe benefits are which God intends you by this ſharp Viſitation; yet you may reſt ſatisfied in this, that there is ſo much reaſon in all his actings, and ſo much good deſigned to his people thereby, that if you were fully acquainted therewith, and had all things at your own ordering, you would diſpoſe of them juſt as he hath done. Did you ſee and know what God does, and had the ſame intentions for the honour of his Name, and the good of your own and others ſouls, you would, had it been at your choice, have choſe all that's come to paſs, as terrible as it may now appear; and would freelie have conſented to a raging peſtilence, though your friends or families might be laid hold on thereby; and to the burning of *London*, though your own dwellings were within the reach of the flames? And ſhall not this reconcile you to whatever God hath done amongſt us? I know not what more you ſhould require for your ſatisfaction, except this be a trouble to you, that you are not made acquainted with the ſecret and unſearchable deſigns of the Almighty in all his works of wonder, which are manifeſted in his Government of the world; that is, that you are men, and not Gods.

But yet as to your own concern, you need not go far to find out what benefit you may make of the preſent Providence, which I ſhall hint in a few particulars: only by the way, let me firſt deſire you to call to mind what is before ſaid of the *happineſs of man*, that it conſiſts in his being made like to God, in his loving, pleaſing, and enjoying of him, partlie here, perfectlie and eternallie hereafter: Wherefore whatever promotes this his chief good, muſt needs be accounted ſo far good for him, however it may appear in other reſpects, ſince the *means*

must be judged of, and denominated only from their ſpect to the end. To lance a ſore till wee ſmart, if make for its healing, is good for the body. It ſee harſh uſage for poor creatures that are diſtracted, to confin'd to dark rooms, and ſometimes bound to th beds, whipt, and ſtript ſhort of food, yet if all this h on their recovery, is it not to be lookt on as good f them? And as eaſily may you apprehend, that whate tends to the weakning of Corruptions, and ſtrengthe of your Graces, enables you to glorifie God, and h you on in the way to Glory, is ſo much for your inter that nothing elſe in the whole world could advance which conduceth not to make you truly, and in Gods count, *Better men*, to which end, your preſent ſuffer may greatly conduce.

(1) As may firſt appear by what I formerly men oned, of the *advantage they give you, for a thorow diſcov ry of the frame and temper of your own Souls.* Nei Grace nor Corruption are ever ſo well known, as in trials. May you not now finde, that the world was nearer to your hearts than you imagined, by the pa you feel at its departure; that you lean'd harder upo than you thought of, by the ſhaking you have met w when it ſlipt from you? May you not perceive that m much of the comfort of your lives did depend upon certain, carnal things, and ſo was it ſelf but vain carnal? May you not finde more earthlineſs, impe ence, and unbelief, than you before ſuſpected to lo in your breaſts? Now though to have theſe Corrupti be matter of trouble, yet to diſcover them, in order their cure, is a mercy. To have a Diſeaſe is a grief, to know it, we ſay, is the firſt ſtep to health. One w or other they muſt be known ſo as to be repented of a mortified, or elſe you were like to fare the worſe for certainly then, the ſooner the better: for the lon

they should lie conceal'd, the greater would bee their strength and mischief, and the difficulter their conqueſt. For this the Psalmist praies, *Psal.* 139. 23,24. and for this, I beleive, you have praid many a time that God would *search and know your hearts*, that is, make them known to you, and now hee hath answered your prayer. This, *Elihu* tells us, is meet to be said unto God, by a man under chastisement, *That which I see not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more. Job* 34. 31, 32. and to the same purpose *Job* 36.9,10. But on the other hand, if these trying Providences manifest your Souls, through the Grace of God, to be in a more sound and healthful temper, so that you can chearfully let go whatever he hath cal'd for, and finde that there is nothing you so vehemently desire, as to comply with the whole will of God, and to be rendred up thereto; that none of his dealings move you to question his truth or goodness, to think hardly of himself, or meanly of his promises; but that stil your love to him is as great as ever, and in his favour alone you can rest abundantly satisfied, if it be thus with you, the very discovery of so blessed a frame, may be matter of greater satisfaction, than the loss of all things else, need be of trouble; yea, if this bee your frame, you cannot be overmuch troubled with any such losses. So that what ever your temper and behaviour is, there will be found great equity in this dispensation. If you bear it heavily and impatiently, the greater it seems was your need of it, since this proceeds from such an affection to the creature, as was the very disease of your Souls, to which this Physick is suited. But if you bear it quietly, then it appears you were fitted for it, and so I know, will bee far from an inclination to complain of him, that hath so well fitted your back for your burden, and gave you not a blow, before hee had furnisht you with an Helmet. And in that these afflictions

ſerve not only to diſcover your Corruptions, but to re-
move them; not onely to manifeſt your Graces, but t
exerciſe and promote them; upon both theſe accoun
they will farther appear to bee for your advantage, as
ſhall proceed to ſhew.

(2) Wherefore in the next place, *Hereby you ha
a very great help to take a true eſtimate of the world, tha
you may be affected towards it, according to its worth and no
otherwiſe:* Now if ever, you may diſcern, how vain, ho
fleeting and uncertain it is. That which even now
in your houſes and hands, and ſeem'd to make ſo good
a ſhew there, in a few hours after, with thoſe hou
themſelves, was not at all to be ſeen, except as expir
into ſmoak, or turned into aſhes. And ſhall not th
very duſt and ſmoak, though at firſt it might wring w
ter from your eyes, help ſo far to clear your ſight, th
the ſplendid appearances of a glittering world, may n
ver more impoſe upon you? May you not now ſee into
and thorow it, and behold what a very nothing it is? To
your own ſenſe, doth it not appear that the uſual title
which Holy Writ beſtows upon it, and all the felici
thereof, are no worſe than it deſerves? Calling it a
Bubble, a *Dream*, very *Vanity*, even *that which is not*. For
have you not ſeen ſtately Fabricks, with all their ric
furniture, flaſh out and diſappear as aiery bubbles u
wont? have you not ſeen fair and flouriſhing eſtates, which
made the owners conceit themſelves in a ſecure and hap-
py condition, able to afford no more comfort than a
Dream when one awaketh, being vaniſh'd into nothing,
whilſt they promiſed all things? Now may not ſuch no-
table ſights as theſe, do very much toward the rectify-
ing of your *judgements* about all worldly things, if before
they were erronious? and toward the moderating of
your *affections* to them, if before they were exceſſive?
He that doted upon a beautiful outſide, will ſoon co
his

his affections, when hee ſees the object of them turned into a loathſome carkaſs. Where's that mans wiſdome, who eagerly catches at the money, which he is certainly told, will turn to coals or dirt in his hand? And where's his underſtanding, I may ſay his ſenſes, who hath not learnt, from what he lately ſaw, that all that a man hath may do ſo?

There are indeed (to digreſs a little) many ſuch excellent leſſons taught by this diſpenſation, that to him who ſoberly and attentively obſerves the ſame, it may prove a moſt profitable Sermon. How fully doth it inform us, what miſerable kinde of people they bee, who have nothing better nor ſurer to truſt to, than ſuch a periſhing world as this? and how fooliſh they are, who needleſly hurry and toil all their daies, and make it the very buſineſs of their life, to get that which can be held no faſter; eſpecially, how ſtark mad they are, whilſt they ſell away their precious ſouls, and an eternal kingdome that might bee made ſure, for ſuch trifles as theſe. It acquaints us alſo with the great weakneſs of the generallity of men, who take ſo much upon them, and carry it ſo high above their neighbours, if they can but ſcrape together a little more wealth than they, as preſently taking themſelves to be much the better men for't: When alas! if this be all they build upon, they may within a few daies come to bee as bad or worſe, than thoſe they before deſpiſed; and ſo, they do not only diſcover their own emptineſs of true worth, by valuing themſelves by ſuch mean and mutable things, but alſo ſtand expos'd to contempt, in their own, as well as other mens judgements: for if they account themſelves wiſe and honourable to day, becauſe they are rich, by the ſame reckoning, they muſt paſs for worthleſs fools to morrow, when they ſhall become poor: and yet what's more common in the world, than to prize and rate men after this ſtrange, ri-

diculous manner, so that he shall be thought ridiculous who contradicts it? Again, this sudden and unavoidable waste that was made of such riches as were in your hands may inform you, how great wisdome it is to dispose of them so as may exempt them from the power of theeves, or fire, or any such dangerous accidents. He that, according to his capacity, layes out his estate for God (or keeps it principally to trade with for him) is that wise Merchant, who puts it into such hands, where not only the principal is secur'd, but an interest of another value, than blinde earth-worms are acquainted with, is certain to be gain'd.

What one saith of *Job*, may be partly applied to your case, that he had lost all but what he had given away. That which hath fed and cloth'd the poor Members of Christ, or any other way been emploied for his service, is still your own, and to bee reckoned as good as ready money, and better too; if there be any truth in the Gospel, which, I presume, you question not. And for your own gain and comfort, I heartily wish, that your expences for Christ, amounted to a greater sum, than an Inventory of your losses by the Fire does; then, though you had nothing to shew but the very clothes upon your backs, I durst confidently affirm, you have more than you have lost. And hence, for the future, you may take direction how to improve and secure what wealth God shall entrust you with, and may be taught the discretion, still to take the first opportunity to that end. The words of our Saviour to *Judas*, which the other Apostles thought had a reference to his giving something to the poor, may very well be applied to that purpose, *That thou dost, do it quickly*. In *good works*, you may without danger, *make hoste to bee rich*. Nay here, if in any thing, delay is dangerous. Not without reason doth the Wise man exhort us *to do good, whil'st it is in the power of*

our

our hand, and not bid our Neighbour come again to morrow, when we have it by us. Prov. 3. 27, 28. That which is to day in your hands, and may bee profitable to your ſelf and brother, may to morrow be ſnatcht out of them, and neither of you bee the better for it. Wherefore learn wiſdome by what you have ſeen: You eſpecially that have but ſeen, not at all, or but little felt the effects of this Fire, let your *lounty* to your impoveriſht brethren, be your *thank-offering* to God for your preſervation. And let all take notice, that if they are ſo backward to render God his own, in that way that it may bee moſt theirs, he can ſend for it in ſuch waies as will bee little for their advantage. Is it not better, think you, to ſend up your treaſures to Heaven voluntarilie, where you may finde them hereafter, than to have them go up thitherwards in clouds of ſmoak, never more to beſtead you? And it will make but little to your commendation or comfort, to have your eſtates fetcht away in this manner by hundreds and thouſands, which before were wont to be ſqueez'd from you for good uſes, onlie by ſixpences and ſhillings.

But to return, the great leſſon which is preſt upon you hence, and which indeed is underſtood in all theſe, is what I before intimated, namelie, how very unfit any thing which the whole affords, is, to be your felicitie and portion; and how unreaſonable it is that you ſhould have the leaſt regard to it as ſuch. And by the palpable diſcovery of its vanitie, which the Providence of God hath made before your eies, you may, through his Grace working with your ſerious conſideration, be brought off from all ſuch inordinate regard to it, which the beſt are too ſubject to. Now without queſtion to have this ſo common and dangerous a diſeaſe weakned and removed, is a far greater mercie than to have had all that is gone from you reſerv'd. Nay, this might have prov'd a fur-

therance of your misery, to have retain'd that which gave strength to your disease. For examine it well, and tell me, whether your very enjoyments have not been a clog and hindrance to you, and made you remiss and sluggish in the way to heaven, by the flatteries and diversions wherewith they were wont to entertain and amuse you?

Have they not spoil'd many a Duty, and rendred many an Ordinance useless, through their too great prepossession of your hearts? Have they not been apt to fill you with false and carnal joyes, with a vain confidence and self-conceit? Hath not the World been a bait and snare to your corrupt natures, and drawn you to unseemly compliances with the guize of this luxurious, fantastical age? in the needless cost and braverie of your attire, houses and furnitures; in the excess of your feastings and entertainments, in a tenderness and delicacie that becomes not the good *Souldiers of Jesus Christ*? These are the common effects of wealth, and the temptations wherewith it is attended; and though the power of Grace might secure you from the more deadly, damning hurt of its charms, yet its too too probable some force they had upon you. What a mercie then may you well account it, if this fire have burnt up so much of your Estate as was hurtful to you, and so refin'd the rest, that it may no more hurt you. Though it will not indeed prove you humble and mortified, because you live at a meaner rate than you were wont, being necessitated thereto; yet this necessity may prove a notable means to that end, and becoming at length the matter of your choice, is capable of being improv'd into a virtue: A great deal of unnecessary expence and stir to gratifie the flesh will be sav'd, when there remains no such plenty to be lavisht away; and hereby may the man in time voluntarily become much more temperate, sober, and self-denying: Poverty may prick the Bladder of Pride which

riches

riches were so apt to blow up; and instead thereof bring in not a forc't, but true humility; yea, the very loss of one great estate, may make the owners resolve never to cover after another, not out of despair, but prudence, as seeing what their designs are all come to, and may do again, if they should follow them as before; and so they may meet with contentedness in a low estate, who went without it in an higher, and may serve God better in want than in their former abundance.

Surelie thus to take Knives or Ratsbane out of Childrens hands is a friendlie office, and when they come to understand what was done for them, they'l so esteem it, though at first they may take on as if they were hurt. Your *friendship to the world is enmity* to your selves as well as to God; and in compassion of your case he is arisen to your assistance, against those lusts which *warr'd against your souls*: and will you not readilie accept his aid, and set in with him against them? Are you not willing to smart a little, so these may die for't? Who would be much troubled for a slight wound, if in receiving it he gave a mortal one to his deadlie Enemie? *Sampson* was willing to have the house fall upon his own head, that he might thereby revenge himself upon the *Philistine* Lords, who had put out his eyes, and were making sport with him: And why should not you as well consent to the fall of your houses and estates too, if therewith that creature-love, delight and confidence, which have done so much to befool and blind you, may be crusht to death? The Physitian is not onlie submitted to, but paid for his Physick, though his bitter Pills and Potions might make us sick before they helpt us to our health? And shall we behave our selves worse toward God, who delights not in our smart and sorrow, onlie *if need be*, will let his deareft servants meet with manifold temptations and tryals? If then the Fire which hath taken away much

much of the world from you, hath taken your worldlines too, and by the influence of the Divine Spirit (that Coelestial Fire) hath made for the purifying of your soule so that you come out of it, as the three Children out of the Furnace, not onlie unhurt, but unbound; having those snares and fetters of carnal affections, whereby you were straitned and enthrall'd, burnt from off you, instead of repining at this Providence, you have reason rather to indite Songs of praise to him that hath redeemed and advanc't you into the truest Libertie, the Noblest Freedome whereof you are capable.

(3.) Another great advantage of this Dispensation is, *That now you have a most proper season for the exercise of faith, patience, and self-resignation*, with such like graces, which are especiallie requisite in, and peculiar to a suffering state. In prosperitie these are as it were obscur'd, (like Stars in the day time) and through disuse weakned, to the great disadvantage of the soul; but adversitie excites and polishes them, puts them upon action, and so displaies their use and excellencie, to the honor of the Author, and the great benefit and comfort of the owners. This we find one end of the tribulations of Christians, *That the tryal of their faith might be found unto praise, honour and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ*, 1 *Pet.* 1.7 And why should not all the Spiritual Powers and Faculties wherewith God hath furnisht his servants be brought into exercise? To what other purpose is Grace bestow'd? Why do Generals furnish their Souldiers with Armour and Weapons, but for the fight? And what a shame would it be for any of these to murmure because he's plac't in the front, or set to guard any Pass which requires watchfulness and valour? How would Valour be actuated and discovered, if there were no difficulties and dangers for it to encounter? The veriest Coward that while might pass for a valiant man. To get so much

Book-

book-skill in Militarie matters, as to be able to discourse
ow an Army should be Govern'd and Marshall'd, how
fets and Retreats should be made, and what should
done in this case and the other, is a matter of no great
ficultie; but to be able actuallie to lead an Army, and
order it aright in all the varieties of Battel, requires
nother kind of courage, conduct, and presence of mind;
nd accordinglie yields another kind of glorie to him
at is possest of, and shews forth the same. Whilst you
ere in a full condition, and all things went according to
our own desires, you might speak, and hear, and read
living by faith, and depending upon God, and resign-
g our selves and all we have to his will, whilst you had
tle tryal for these Graces. But now, Sirs, shew what
u can *do*, being brought upon the Stage, whether you
ve been so diligent in learning your part, that you can
w act it readilie and becominglie. What comfort can
u now take in a promise, who have little else left to
ust to? Can you bear up manfullie under all your
ssures, resting singly on the truth, goodness, and
ll-sufficiencie of God? Can you follow him confident-
e, though he lead you in the dark? Can you submit to
nd imbrace his will, when it contradicts your senses?
his is a season for discovering how you have improv'd
our time, and the means you have had to get well fit-
ed for what you might afterward be call'd to; would
u be content to spend your time and pains in training
a servant to his work, and after that let him lie idle,
nd shew no fruit of all? Or if your negligence hath been
ch, that so long prosperitie, and so great advantages as
you therein enjoyed, have been lost upon you, it is but
t that adversitie it self should teach you, what it seer
you will learn no other way. And indeed we are c
monly too remiss in times of ease and peace, to
provision for the troubles that may be coming u

like fooliſh Travellers, that becauſe the Sun ſhine when they ſet out, think not of preparing for a Storm: for ſuch men to be well weather-beaten, is the beſt way to make them more provident for the future: As in fencing, to hit a man a ſound blow, will do more to make him ſtand upon his Guard, than a bare direction would; or, if you will, as Wars themſelves do more to make men expert Souldiers, than any Fencing-School or Training exerciſes can. Thus the Apoſtle tells us, that *tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience*, Rom. 5. 3. Now a Chriſtian comes more to ſee the want of his ſpiritual armour than before he did, and therefore labours and prays for it with greater diligence and earneſtneſs. But if any man ſhould ask, whether it was not better never to have need of this, by being freed from thoſe afflictions that make it neceſſary? I may take leave to tell him, it ſavours of an impudence, unbeſeemirg ſo filly a Creature as man, to call in queſtion the proceedings of his Maker, and demand whether he might not have ordered things better than he hath. Who ſhould preſcribe the way to heaven, but he that owns both it and us, and may beſtow it upon what conditions he will? And though (if need were) it might be evident that there is great wiſdome and equity in that order which God hath eſtabliſht, yet its enough for us, that we are told it is his pleaſure, that *through many tribulations we muſt enter into his Kingdome*, and muſt fight before we triumph, overcome before we are crown'd. And if this be his ſetled will, we may eaſily apprehend how needful faith and patience are for this preſent ſtate; and how much for our advantage that condition is, which does not only put us upon the exerciſe, but tends to the advancement of them.

(4.) All theſe your loſſes may prove very gainful to you, as, *hereby your hearts may be drawn nearer to God, carri-*

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ed out more after him, and caused to adhere to him with the greater firmness, resolution and affection; as upon several accounts may appear. This will indeed necessarily follow from what went before, what interest the world loseth in your hearts, God will gain: so much as your affections are taken off from things below, so much will they be plac't the more upon things above. Moreover, so disingenuous and inconsiderate we are, as often to be drawn away into a forgetfulness of God, by those very mercies and comforts which should have made us mindful of him, and engag'd us closer to him, and in such a case (which happens too frequently) by the removal of those we may better learn what a kind of dependance that is we have alwayes upon him, and how much we have been beholden to his bounty, when we were little affected to it. It is also very profitable for us t obe sometimes cast into such a plunge, whence we plainlie perceive God only can deliver us; for this will put us upon more sollicitous enquiries after him, make us relie upon him, and that with all our weight and stress, and will help us to a clearer sense of his loving kindness and Almightiness, in affording us relief when all other refuges fail'd us. A friends hand put out to a drowning man is grasp't with another kind of fastness, and regarded with another kind of welcome and dearness, than when they walkt together upon the Land. Furthermore, when that which was wont to stand in competition with God, and to divide our hearts betwixt it self and him, shall be taken out of the way, there's great hopes that we shall with more ease and steadiness center upon him alone. He that's at a stand which of two friends (that are of contrarie parties) he should adhere to, may quickly be resolved, when he finds one of them forsaking him, the other sticking to him at his greatest need: when we have found there was a *lye in our right hand*, it may

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drive us most effectuallie to the true and everliving God. Nothing but wilful sottishness could any longer make a question, whether God or *Baal* was to be followed, when they saw to what disgrace the Idol had expos'd his Priests, whom he could neither hear nor help, and how palpably he was witnest against by fire from heaven. And if it was possible for any of you to be so weak, as in the least to *halt betwixt two Opinions*, whether God or the World was to be followed with greatest earnestness, imbrac't with most affection, I hope the controversie is now fully at an end. You see what a God the World is, that cannot defend its self, much less its followers: but the Lord *Jehovah* is still as good, and powerful, and sufficient, as ever he was, and will so remain for ever. Shall not then all the love and confidence you had scattered away and misplac't upon the Creature, be recollected thence, and fixt upon him, who (as you may now plainly see) only deserves it, and who only can require it? How can you now chuse but say within your selves: *Well, since the World hath thus taken its farewell, and fled away, why should we follow it with sighs and tears, and refuse to be comforted because it is not? Why should we mourn for that which hath profited us so little, and been no more kind and faithful to us? No, rather let us sit down and bewail our folly in over-loving such trifles, than be guilty of worse in languishing after them, when we have found that they are such; and with these tears in our eyes let us betake our selves to our loving and good God, from whom our hearts have too much wandred, and beseech him to take them wholly to himself, and never more suffer them to dote upon so unworthy, unsuitable objects.* And indeed what way have you left, if you should all consult for your own interest, but thus to retire to God? If you should yet rather cleave to the Remnant of your Estates, or fortifie your selves with hopes of recovering them, and from these grounds fetch your chief

support, as carnal ones do, you do but more hazard the loss of all, and the utter blasting of these hopes.

If you indeed belong to God, hee'l throw down all your fortresses, and drive you out of all your holds, but hee'l recover you to himself. If ingenuity will not bring you, necessitie shall. And is it not Fatherly love that thus concerns it self with you, and brings you under the happy discipline of his familie, and will leave no means untryed, rather than suffer you to remain at such an hurtful distance from him. And how great is his goodness, that he will so readilie receive and welcome us, upon our return to him after all our strayings; yea, although we are thus fetcht back again by a kind of necessity? Might he not justlie upbraid us with our former unthankful and unkind behaviour? that we were so strange to him in the day of our prosperity, and liv'd as if we had no great need of him, that we came not to him till all our other lovers had forsaken us; might he not therefore bid us, now go to them in the day of our extremity, and see what they can do for us? But so gracious is his Nature, that he treats us not after this rate, as in Justice he might; but is ready to give us the same loving entertainment, that the Father in the Gospel did to his Prodigal Son.

To conclude then, Will not this prove a singular mercy, to have your Husks remov'd, that so you may be brought into your Fathers arms, and live more upon the substantial satisfying bread that is in his house? Will you not acknowledge it to proceed from love, that when you attended not as you ought to more gentle calls, God hath dealt with you much like as *Absalom* with *Joab*, who when he had twice sent for him in vain, set fire on his Field to bring him away? And be sure, God calls you not thus earnestlie to him upon any trivial business; wisdome and goodness shine forth in all his actings: And

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will you not soon own them in this, when you shall be by be put upon making up your losses out of God himself, upon searching more diligentlie than ever you did, what there is to be found in him that will suppose and satisfie a man that hath nothing else to trust to. Will it, do you think, make nothing for your interest, by these searches to attain clearer apprehensions of the boundless treasures of goodness to be had in God, and of his most perfect adequate suitableness to the humane soul? When moreover, you shall be brought to live more singly upon him, to converse more feelinglie with him, and shall better relish those sureſt pleasures of his presence and service, and shall be more sollicitous than ever to make sure that he is yours, and to walk so, that you may keep your Evidences clear? Is he worthy the name of a Christian, that if these priviledges were to be bought, would not willinglie part with all he had to obtain them? Why then should not you as willinglie part with what God sees fit to remove, in order to his giving in the same? *Estate's sweet, but Life's sweeter*, saith the Marriner, when he throws his goods overboard to preserve his temporal life; and will not you chearfullie bear as much for the advancement of a Spiritual and Divine Life? And if these prove indeed the fruits of God's present dealings with you, will you not be found as much beholden to this Fire he sent (excepting only a local translation) as *Elias* was to his Fiery Chariot, whilst it thus refines you from your earthlinesse, and carries your soul so much nearer to God?

5. But lastly, The benefit of this Providence may hereafter more fully appear, *in that it may prove an happy means of preparing you for some further tryals that God shall call you to, or for death it self, whenever it shall befall you.* Though you should not now so well know what God is doing with you, yet you may know hereafter: He only

in whose hands our times are, can tell what daies you may be reserved for, and what it may cost you faithfully to follow the Lamb in the way that he hath led and prescrib'd you. And perhaps he saw you more entangled in the affairs of this life, than is fit for those that have your warfare to accomplish, and more than would suffer you to please him whose Souldiers you are. The way that is yet behind for you to walk over, may be so rough and untrod, that whilst you were laden with thick clay, you could not have been able to make progress therein, and therefore may you be rendred more light and fit for travel; the weight which prest you down being taken away, even an earthlie load without you, and the greater load of carnal affections from within. In times of suffering for the truth, there's nothing ordinarily proves a more dangerous snare than a great estate. It had been happy, for ought I know, for the young man in the Gospel, if all his possessions had been burnt before he came to Christ; he had then, at least, wanted that temptation which made him go away sorrowful. And as happy had it been for many another, if their riches had been sent the same way, before they were call'd to lose them for Christ: for then we may probably suppose, they had not forsaken him for love of this present world, which none are so apt to do, as they who have most in it to cleave to. In St. *James* his time, it was the rich men that were oppressors and persecutors, whilst the poor onlie were Confessors and Martyrs, *Jam.* 2. 5, 6, 7. And so in all times it is usual. How know you then but God hath taken the world from you, least in a day of trial it should have drawn you away from him. Thus may the burning of your houses enable you the better to burn at a stake, if ever you should be call'd to't; and so one *Fiery Tryal* would fit you for another. But though you escape this, yet death you cannot escape; and to behold in this

manner the Funeral of worldlie wealth and glorie, may very much prepare you for your own. The greater troubles you meet with in your journey, will they not make you long the more for your journeys end? When the Traveller finds his money fall short, or himself tired out with the length and badness of his way, then he falls more heartilie to wishing himself at home: Not that you ought in one of *Jonah*'s Pets to take on, and desire by all means to die presentlie, because your *Gourds are withered*, your flourishing estates faded away. None ordinarilie are more unfit, and if the truth was known, more unwilling to die, than they who in a discontented mood are wishing themselves dead; for it must be love to heaven, more than weariness of the earth, that can confer this fitness, and this willingness. But yet without question, you may make this improvement of all the smart and weariness you feel, thereby to be set a longing after the promised ease and rest. Those desires after death, which proceed from a serious apprehension of the Worlds vanity, and its unfitness to be your resting place, and are bounded with a submission to Gods Will, are not onlie lawful, but commendable; and you may esteem it a mercie to have them quickned: Perhaps whilst your present state was pleasant and desirable, you found it something difficult to get heartilie willing to leave it, or to represent to your self any other condition so much better, as might make you desirous to part with this: But now, I hope, this difficultie is much abated, if not wholie removed. If you found such plentiful and pleasing entertainment in your Inne, that you began to think of abiding there, and to grow forgetful of your own home, will you not be of another mind when you have met with rougher usage? It is not *Lazarus* his hard fare, but *Dives* his dailie dainties, and such like Bands of love, which chain poor creatures to the World. Moreover, it

ill is to be considered, that at Death you must have undergone the same, and a greater trial than now you have done, in leaving that which hath now left you; and then to have found your heart sticking to the creature, and unwilling to bee torn from it, would have been much more grievous to you. Far safer it is that our Bladders slip from under us in the shallow water, where we may trie our skill with lest hazard, than in the deep, where wee must either swim or drown. By this experience you have had of your selves, how you can bear the departure of the world, if you have found out your weakness, you are yet in a capacitie of looking out for help, and getting better provided for your last great encounter; or if you have discovered strength, you may the more chearfullie expect, and boldlie address your selves thereunto. Thus you see, this affliction, *which at present seems not joyous but grievous, may afterwards yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness, to those that are exercised therewith*: And therefore it seems no way absurd to apply the exhortation to you, which we finde, *Jam.* 1.10. *Let the brother of high degree* (not only be content, but) *rejoyce that he is* (thus to his advantage) *made low.*

And besides what may accrue to the sufferers themselves, I might (the more to engage their submission) mention the good that may hereby be done to others; as this signal Providence may tend to awaken our Land, and put us upon Repentance and Reformation; or at least may quicken all that are serious, to do what in them lies for the promoting of this work; and may also be a means of terrifying some careless sinners from their waies of wickedness, and of bringing them home to God. If any such work as this was to be done, or a warning given to the Nation, and God saw fit to do it by the burning of our Metropolis, why should you not freely consent that your houses should go in with others, for the

accomplishment of his Will? If their destruction may be any means of preventing the overthrow of the Kingdome; yea, or keep any poor soul out of eternal burning; You have no cause to finde fault with their being laid out so well. And if any one should think it might have conduc't more to these ends, to have singled out the dwellings of the prophanest sinners, and made them warnings to the rest, sparing all such as feared God: They may do well to remember, that it becomes not them to prescribe to infinite wisdome, what waies to take for the bringing about his own designs; which designs we are far from knowing perfectly, and less perfectly can we tell, what means are best suited for the compassing of them. But, I suppose, I have said so much of the benefits, that may hereby be given in to true Christians, as may sufficiently demonstrate, that this cloud, as dark as it is, hath a bright side shining upon Gods people, which may, in its kinde, do them as much service, as the Pillar of Fire did to the *Israelites* in their March: Whil'st they, that *Ægyptian*-like, are clouded with the mists of wickedness and errour, neither perceive the benefit they enjoy, nor partake of it. And though such blinde Atheists, or inconsiderate ones, may to their own hurt, mis-construe the methods of Providence, in lashing the good and sparing the bad, or dealing alike with both; yea, though *upright men* themselves may be somewhat *astonied at this, yet shall the innocent stir up himself against the Hypocrite; the righteous also shall hold on his waies, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger, Job* 17. 8, 9. And thus, I hope, should I say no more, I have shewed you abundant ground for patience and quietness under the hand of God. Since

(1) It is the hand of God, who cannot wrong you, and therefore gives you no cause to murmur.

(2) This hand of God hath not hurt you, and therefore

fore gives you no cauſe to complain.

(3) It may greatly profit you, and ſo rather gives you cauſe to be thankful. Two or three Conſiderations more I have to ſuggeſt, which I ſhall with more brevity diſpatch, having ſtood ſo long on theſe.

4. Though your ſufferings themſelves cannot, yet *your impatience under them may very much hurt you, whil'ſt on the other ſide, your patience will equally turn to your advantage.* And this may ſufficiently inſtruct you, if you have any reſpect to your own intereſt, outward or inward, which to chooſe. To purſue this in a particular inſtance or two.

(1) By quarrelling with Gods Will in his proceedings, *you add ſin to your afflictions*, and thereby put a ſting into them, that may do you that miſchief, which otherwiſe they never could. What think you is a ſin, if this be not, to be diſcontent with any thing which God ſhall do with you? Do you not ſeem ſo far to accuſe him of want, either of wiſdome, faithfulneſs, or goodneſs, and ſo of want of fitneſs and right to bee your Governour? And what's this, but to deſire that your affairs were in your own hands, as if then you could order them better? And have you not reaſon to ſuppreſs the very firſt motions which have ſo much wickedneſs, rebellion, and little leſs than blaſphemie in them? You may remember here, what I have formerly ſaid, to demonſtrate that ſin is the greateſt miſchief that can light upon the ſoul of man. If to comply with the Divine Will, in all expreſſions of it, be his only intereſt, then to reſiſt this Will, muſt needs be his greateſt miſery? Verily, there is no ſuch a deformed monſtrous ſight in the whole world, as to behold a creature riſing up againſt his Maker, and entring into a ſolemn war with Heaven it ſelf; whether it be in violating his gracious precepts, or repining at his wiſe providences. And the very howling of Wolves, or croaking of

Toads, is a thousand times more acceptable noise, than to hear men complain and speak ill of the blessed and good God, or any of his waies: For their noise, be it never so harsh, is natural to them; but this harsher voice of murmuring, is most unnatural, and a very breaking of the *harmony* of the Creation, which consists in a sweet and chearful obedience of all creatures to him, from whom they receiv'd their beings, faculties, conditions, and employments; and in their constant celebrations of his bountie, according to their several capacities. Is not the dumb meekness of a Lamb more grateful to all men, than the roarings and strivings of a Swine? Especially when kindness, rather than violence, is offered to us, however our false opinions represent it. Want of reason may excuse the struglings of a Bruit, when you go to pluck a Thorn out of his foot, or do him any the like courtesie; but such bruitishness in a Reasonable Creature, is inexcusable! Believe it, Sirs, such unseemly carriage as this, is infinitely worse in the thing it self, and more disgraceful to you in the eyes of God and good men, than your losing all the monie and goods you had in the world: This meanness of spirit, is another kinde of unhappiness and dishonour, than any other poverie. But on the contrarie, to bear up under Gods hand with patience and courage, is a greater commendation and priviledge, than to abound in all riches. Whatever the world may think, it is undoubtedly true, that to *comply with the will of God under any suffering, is a greater blessing, than to have been secured from that suffering.* To be content with sickness as it comes from God, is a greater mercie than to bee in health; and so patience under all your losses, is a greater happiness than to have lost nothing: For the worst of men may partake of these temporal favours; but good men only are enricht with so excellent a spirit. This tried and approved Faith and Pa-

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tience; *are much more precious than the Gold that is tryed* (or than all that you have loſt) *by the fire.* How worthie and commendable a thing is it, for a Chriſtian in the loweſt, pooreſt, and moſt afflicted ſtate, ſtill to think and ſpeak as well and honourablie of God, who hath brought him into it, as ever before he was wont? To Apologize for that Providence which hee ſmarts under, and to let Spectators know, that hee diſcerns ſo much equitie and mercie in it, that he cannot chuſe but ſubmit thereto? Might you not hereby do more to vindicate God before the world, than any other, by bare diſcourſing can? And by your practice might condemn and ſhame all thoſe unmanlie ones that act contrarilie; and may convince themſelves and others, that it is from the weakneſs of their Faith, the falſeneſs of their opinions, and the unrulineſs of their paſſions, that they keep ſuch a complaining, and not from any real cauſe that God hath given them. This you may teach them more effectually than another out of your condition can: For they are preſently apt to reply to ſuch a one, *If you was in my caſe, you would be as bad your ſelf*; but when they ſee one in the like caſe, whoſe carriage is ſo unlike theirs, they will the ſooner bee put to ſilence, and ſet upon imitation of it. And would not this, do you think, very much endear you to God, to behold in you ſuch a love for himſelf, ſuch a liking of his actions, and ſuch a zeal for his honour? How do we finde him, as it were, glorying of the perſeverance of his Champion *Job*, to Satan his Accuſer, in that he held faſt his integrity, although his eſtate was deſtroyed, *Job* 2.3. And does not both God and Satan now look upon *you*, to obſerve how you will behave your ſelves? and will it not pleaſe and glorifie God, vex and confound Satan, to behold your carriage, like that holy mans? How acceptable, alſo, will it bee to the Lord Jeſus, to ſee you tranſcribe the copy he ſet you, *to walk as he walks*, when upon earth, and to carry your ſelves as hee wont,

under all the sufferings he met with in it? And if the eye of the Prince, or General, will infuse valour into the soul of the veriest Coward, shall it not animate and raise your spirits, to remember what Spectators you have, besides the Inhabitants of this lower world? Even God himself, and Christ, and all the holy Angels. You need not sure bee told, how much you are concern'd to gain the good liking of these, and how much weight there is in their approbation; nor on the other side, how sad and shameful it would bee for you, to have all these ashamed of you, for your Cowardize and fainting.

(2) Beside the hurt that comes to your inward man, *you will finde no benefit to your outward concerns, by frowardness and impatience.* He that tumbles and strives, *like a wilde Bull in a net*, will never the sooner dis-entangle himself. There's nothing to bee gotten of God by this course. He that spar'd not his Rod, though hee knew it might displease you, will not take it off meerly because you are not pleas'd with it. Wise Parents, though never so tender, use not to have regard to all the foolish passions and desires of their Children: and as little reason is there, that God should give heed to yours: For are they any better than childish, whilest the great ground of them (to give no other proof) is, that worldly things are perishing and transitory; or, that according to their nature, they are past away from you. Now what weakness would you account it, for any man to sit weeping for a beautiful Flower, because it withers in his hand, and because the winter-cold will not permit him to have his fair Tulips and sweet Roses? Or to afflict himself, because the Moon waxes and wanes, and will not alwaies abide in the Full? What relief would you have given to this fond mourner? Should the seasons of the year, or the course of nature be alter'd to gratifie his humour? And do you not know that there are *changes* in Sublunary things, as well as in the Moon? Seasons and

and Viciſſitudes in our condition, as well as in the year? And both proceed from the ſame wiſdome, though they appear not alike regular and conſtant. There is a Day and Night, a Winter and Summer, of proſperity and adverſity (I ſpeak of things without us.) And of theſe we may ſay, as the Plaſmiſt of the other, ſpeaking to God; *The day is thine, the night alſo is thine: Thou haſt made ſummer and winter*, *Pſal.* 74. 16, 17. And is there any reaſon that he ſhould alter the ſeaſons, and change the nature of things, or the courſe of his providence, for the ſatisfaction of every man that is not pleaſed with it? Or if this ſhould ſeem too notional, you may eaſily apprehend, that peeviſhneſs and ſtubbornneſs, may provoke God rather to continue, than ceaſe from laſhing you. 'Tis no diſcretion in a Parent, to ſpare the Rod alwaies when the Childe cries, (the Wiſe man adviſes the contrary) much leſs to diſmiſſe him whil'ſt he is ſtomachful: And why ſhould you think the *Father of Spirits* will leave you, till he hath brought you into better ſubjection to him? It ſeems by your carriage, there is much corruption left in the Soul to be drawn out: and the ſame mercy that applied a Corraſive becauſe it was needful, is like to hold it on whilſt it is ſo. But when the cure is wrought, when patience hath had its perfect work within you, you are nearer to a freedome from that, which hath been the exerciſe of your patience. When the Childe is brought to kiſs the Rod, the Father is wont to lay it down. When you can heartily ſay to God, *Thy Will bee done*, you are likelieſt to hear from him, *Be it to thee as thou wilt*. For they bold creature-comforts faſteſt, who ſit looſeſt from them; they deſerve them beſt, and are in the leaſt danger of being hurt by them. *To humble our ſelves under the mighty hand of God*, is a ſure way, *in his due time to be exalted*, 1 Pet. 5. 6. *You have heard of the patience of Job, and ſeen the end of the Lord, that hee is very pitiful and of*

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tender mercy. James 5. 11. And none taste sooner, more plenteously of this pity and mercy, than they who are most perfectly subdued to his pleasure.

(3) They that give way to impatience, if they will but have while to look into themselves, may easily discern what harm there is in it, if it were for nothing else but *that continual disquiet and inward torment wherewith it is attended.* The passionate man, as well as the *cruel, pricketh his own flesh.* The most factious Souldier in an Army, or seditious Citizen in a Common-wealth, cannot raise half those stirs and tumults there, as unruly passions do in a Soul. What mire and dirt do they continually cast up? And how do they unfit us for duty to, and converse with, both God and our Brother, and embitter all the comforts we enjoy? There is no *Nero* nor *Phalaris* in the world, so ingeniously cruel, as man when he becomes his own Tormentor. He does worse by far, than the Queen we are told of, who held an Asp to her breast: for hee maintains a gnawing Worm continually within him, which is near a kin to that we read of, which *never dies.* Though affliction might make his flesh smart, yet it could not so pierce his soul, did not he himself drive it in; putting vexation into the creature, which is vanity. A Sword, which hee findes sticking in his Clothes, hee madly thrusts forward, and therewith stabs himself to the heart. A Spider, which was faln into his Cup, whence it might have been gently taken without any hurt, hee squeezes and swallows down, to poison himself, if possible, therewith. How else could it be, that mens losing of their estates, should make them lose their wits too? Sure there's no such connexion betwixt their mony and their reason, that they must stand and fall together. But the business is, they sit poring upon their troubles, and representing them to themselves so dreadfully, till their spirits are overwhelmed, and their brains weakned thereby:

by: Like a foolish man, who should get a Glass, that presents Spectators with hideous sights and shapes, of Monsters and Devils, and then stand gazing in it, till with the very horrour, hee goes besides himself. Now though I hope none that fear God, are capable of such exorbitancies of passion, yet let them beware of the first risings and bublings up thereof in the soul, least they should swell to a boisterous Sea, whose waves they will difficultly repress and calm. Thus you see the inordinate *sorrow of the world, works death*, whilst by *subjection* to him that corrects us, *we live*, *Heb.* 12. 9. And live indeed we do, at another rate than discontented, sickly mindes are wont. By *patience* wee do truly *possess our souls*, and enjoy our selves, and may feel little alteration within, whatever is done without us. Though I will not say it's an easier thing, to rise up to this quiet, humble frame, than to fall into the contrary, yet I may well say, it's much more for the ease of the Soul, when attain'd to; so much more as will abundantly recompence all the pains taken in the getting of it, and may well set men upon diligence to that purpose: Especially if we consider what was said before, that this is the neatest and surest way to deliverance. And if it be so, an easie way I am sure it is: What's this, but *stand still and see the salvation of the Lord*? Or as the Prophet to the *Jews*, *In returning and rest shall ye be saved, in quietness and confidence shall be your strength. Isa.* 30. 15. Or if the outward afflictions should still remain upon you, yet there is in some sense, *a way made to escape*, whilst you are thus *made able to bear it*, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13.

Lastly, Consider how by your unseemly dejection under the hand of God, *you may do very much to the prejudice of the Christian Religion*, which you profess heartily to believe and love. What will the Atheist, or what will the prophane scoffer say, when they shall see this? So sot-

ſottiſh and malicious they are, that if they do but ſee you in affliction, they are ſtraightway ſcornfully demanding *Where is now their God?* But what will they ſay, if they ſhould hear you your ſelves unbelievingly cry out *Where is our God?* Will they not be ready to cry, *This is the Religion they make ſuch boaſt of, which you ſee how little it does for them in a day of extremity: They talkt of promiſes, rich and precious promiſes, but where are they now? Or to what purpoſe do they ſerve? They ſaid they had a treaſure in Heaven, what ails them mourn ſo then, if their riches be there?* And carnal worldlings will bee drawn to think, that whatever fine talk you might have about God and Heaven, your hearts were moſt upon the ſame things that theirs were, ſince your grief for their removal, is as great as theirs. They know by experience, what a ſtay it is to the heart, to have an able, faithful friend to depend upon, or to have hopes of a great eſtate ſhortly to fall to them; and they'l never be perſwaded, you have any ſuch ground of comfort, if they ſee you as much caſt down, as thoſe that pretend to no ſuch matter. By this means, the precepts of Chriſt to conſtancy and contentment in all eſtates, will come to bee lookt upon (like thoſe of the *Stoicks*) only as *Magnifica verba*, Brave words, but ſuch as are impoſſible to bee practis'd; and the whole of the Goſpel will be taken for an Aiery notion, ſince they that profeſs greateſt regard to it, are no more helpt thereby. Oh what a ſhame is it, that Religion ſhould in this caſe make no more difference betwixt man and man! That it ſhould not, do I ſay? Yes ſurely it will, where ever it is in truth and power. For does not the eſſence of it, lye in the ſouls being brought off from the world, and ſelf-will, to the love of God and ſubjection to him? Wherefore ſo much ſubmiſſion to his will, ſo much holineſs and religion there is in the ſoul. Oh Sirs, theſe (though they make not ſuch a noiſe and ſhew in

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the world) are better differences of a godly man from a wicked, than any outward profession and performances; (though these also may have their use and excellence.) Wherefore shew to the world (what ever their common censures are) that it is not so much your care to differ from them in some by-opinions and little strictnesses, as in humility, meekness, contempt of the World, and heavenly-mindedness. And now let these graces display themselves, by your chearful, patient deportment under all your grievances. And labour you to chear up your poor Neighbours, and let them know what an unjust and foolish thing it is, to be so much concernd for these things, whilst there are ten thousand times greater offered to their choice: and above all, see that your counsels are backt by your examples. This will force an admiration from beholders, and make them *take knowledge you, that you have been with Jesus.* Your belief and confidence in the promises of the Gospel, being thus made manifest, will honour them and him that made them; and may put others upon enquiry, what it is in Religion that produceth such notable effects: As the brave undaunted behaviour of Primitive Christians under hardships and cruelties, drew many Heathens first to admire, after to search into, and embrace Christianity.

If these things bee well weighed, you cannot but acknowledge, that the patience and calmness, I am perswading you to, is much more for your interest both of soul and body, than the contrary temper: And if this be granted, need I say any more to men of common reason, to direct, or exhort them, which to pursue and embrace. And so much for the fourth particular.

5. Farther reason for, and help to this holy frame; you may finde, *If you will but take an impartial view of the many mercies, which are still vouchsafed you;* the consideration whereof may instruct you, how unreasonable

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and dis-ingenuous it is, to have your eyes so fil'd with tears for, and your mindes so possest with, the thought of what you have lost, that you should overlook and forget what you have left. Especially when the mercies yet left, are so very considerable as yours are, both Temporal and Spiritual. Is it nothing, do you think, that your lives are preserved, though your livelihood be lessened? This was promised to *Ebedmelech* as a great favour, *that his life should be given him for a prey*, *Jer.* 39. 18. And doubtless *Lot* took it for such, when the Angel rescued him from the flames that consum'd his City. When he was bid to escape for his Life, we read not of any Goods that he carried along with him. And though this preservation was more signal to him (as *Noah's* also was) in that the rest of the Inhabitants were destroy'd, yet is the mercie never the less to you, for having more to partake thereof: but you have cause administred to blesse God, not only for your selves, but also on the behalf of your neighbours, friends, and relations; whereas *Lot* himself did not altogether enjoy this privilege, his Sons in Law perishing *in* the fire, and his Wife looking back *upon* it: Her fault, it's probable, being that which I am wishing you to avoid, *viz.* That she had a longing minde after her House and Goods, instead of a thankful heart for her Life, wherefore *remember Lot's Wife*. But yet you know, some there were (though, blessed be God, but a few) that lost their lives in the late Conflagration, and that neither you nor yours were of the few, you owe it to free mercie, and owe for it the best of thankfulness. If then it be true (what Truth himself hath told us) that *the life is more than meat, and the body than raiment*, have you any reason to repine, while the better is preserv'd, though the worse should not? But, farther, I suppose, there are very few, if any of you stript so bare, as not to have food and raiment, while

whilst you have, you are commanded to be content, and have reason to bee so; you may see both, 1 *Tim.* 6. 8. Jacob's ambition went no higher, than for Bread to eat, and Clothes to put on, *Gen.* 28. 20. and have not you these still? What though they be plain and homely, if they supply the necessities of nature, and keep you fit for the works you have to do in the world, what do you need from them more? Reason and Religion will tell you, this is enough, whatever a fleshly disposition may repine after. Moreover, have you not health and strength, your reason and senses? besides all other particular mercies to your selves or yours, whereof your own thoughts may present you with a larger Catalogue than I can rehearse.

And let me put it to your Conscience, whether it is more seemly for you that are encompast with so many mercies, to own and admire the goodness of the Donour, or sadly to lament the removing of somewhat you enjoyed, and peevishly to quarrel with him that did it. How would you cry shame upon such carriage among men? to see any one repine at his friend for calling in an hundred pound, whilst yet hee left him twice as much in his hand: Or for a Childe to murmur at his Father, from whom he hath all his maintenance, for withdrawing from him something that hee may well enough bee without. And how just your thankfulness is upon account of what you enjoy, will yet plainlier appear, if you consider, that all you have proceeds purely from the kindness of your benefactor; and that he can as easily remove all, as any part; yea, and may justly do it, and you have rather deserv'd that hee should so. Look abroad also into the world, and observe what multitudes there are in a worse condition than you; and look back upon former times, and see what straits many of Gods dearest servants have been brought to. Such of whom the *World was not worthy,*

thy, found no better entertainment in it, than *in Sheep-skins and Goatskins, to wander up and down in wilderness and mountains, dens and caves of the earth*; and have not you better raiment and lodging than so? *Paul* tells us of himself, that he was in hungrings and watchings, and maintained himself by the work of his hands. Yea, the Lord Jesus himself, when on earth, underwent hunger and thirst, watching and weariness, and had not so much as where to lay his head. And is the Servant greater than his Master? Or shall he complain whilst he hath the same, or better usage than he? 'Tis recorded (as I remember) of *Alexander*, that when a dish of water was brought him, in a time when all his Army was sore afflicted with thirst, hee threw it away, on purpose to teach them patience by his own example. And shall not the example of Jesus, the Captain of our Salvation, do much more to make all his Souldiers willing to endure hardship, which hee hath born before them? and hath shewed that it is tollerable, and promised to make it so to them.

But besides the many temporal mercies that are reserv'd you, which bespeak contentment with your present estate, you have such spiritual priviledges, as may be strong engagements to this durie. At what rate is it to bee valued, that you were born and brought up where the Gospel is purely dispens'd: not in *India*, or *Turky*, where it is not known nor embrac't; not in *Spain* or *Italy*, where it is so much lockt up from the people: but in *England*, where it hath been so industriously publish'd and inculcated. And tell me what you think, if these glad tidings of salvation were now newly come to your ears, discovering the true God, and the way to happiness with him through the Messiah, and you were but just com'e out of Heathenish darkness to the beholding of this glorious light; would it not so swallow up and delight you souls

souls; that you would scarce minde any thing without you, nor ever once more think of your lost estate, with any kinde of trouble? 'Tis very probable it might have such effects upon you, if receiv'd in the power of it: for we finde it had no less upon those first Christians, who so willingly sold all they had, and laid it at the Apostles feet. And why should the Gospel be the less regarded, because you have been long acquainted with it? Its own worth, and the mercie to you is never the less, and therefore ought your esteem of it, and its force upon you to be as great: Especiallie, since it hath pleased God to make it effectual to your souls, and hath thereby brought you to the knowledge and love of himself, through Jesus Christ. And is not this such a peculiar important favour, that it may make you bear any thing comfortably, which is no prejudice to it? To have God enrich and adorn you with the graces of his Spirit, to give his Son to be your Husband and Head, and himself, through him to become your loving Father and satisfying portion, what would you desire, or what can you have more than this? Or what can come amiss to you whilst you have it? There was some reason, though mixt with harshness, in *Joab's* speech to *David*, when hee took him up so roundly for his unseasonable, excessive lamentations of *Absaloms* death, after a rebellion had been suppresst by the gaining of a victory, telling him (with many other words) that he *perceiv'd if Absolom had liv'd, and all the peopl died, it had pleased him well*, 2 *Sam.* 19. 6. And may not you, whose sorrows are excessive for worldly losses, be justly charg'd with as great fondness and folly? For does not your carriage seem to speak, *that if the world had liv'd and flourisht with you, though all your other comforts had died, it had pleas'd you well?* And does not this shew (as *David* is there charg'd) *that you love your enemies, and have but little regard for your friends?* For tell

me, if you account the mercies that are left you of more worth than those that are fled away, why do you not rejoyce more in those which you have, than grieve for the want of these? And may not God justly say to you (to continue the allusion) *that if you will not arise and be comforted, all the kindness hee hath hitherto shewn you, shall be withdrawn? And that would indeed be worse for you, than any evil that hath befaln you, from your youth until now.* Must it not needs be highly displeasing to God, to see his people not to be content with him alone, except they may have their part in the creature as others have? will not even carnal men in this respect condemn you? For they can make a kinde of miserable shift *without God in the world*, and cannot you finde enough in God for your satisfaction without the world? How, I beseech you, can this consist with your profession to take him for your God? By which we mean a Being in whom all perfections and excellencies, all that is needful or desirable for the soul, is to be plenteously found. And can that be really taken for your God, in the having of which, you reckon not your selves abundantly provided for in every regard? Do you think indeed, there is not enough in God to make those that love him, at all times, perfectlie and compleatlie happy, though they had no creature in the world to rest upon? May not they, to whom *the Lord is the portion of their cup and their inheritance*, well say, that their *cup runneth over*, and that they have a *goodly heritage*, though they should not have one foot of Land, nor scarce a bit of Bread to put in their mouths? Certainly God is all and more than all, and they that enjoy his favour, can want no good thing, but may alwaies glory in that sufficiencie and redundancie of felicitie laid up for them in him. Even here on earth, in the absence of all other comforts, God hath waies of conveying more suitable, substantial comfort, than the whole world can afford, to

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believing Souls that have their whole recourse to, and affectionately hang upon him. You that have *tasted that the Lord is Gracious*, cannot but acknowledge this. Wherefore, call to minde your own experiences of his goodnes, and what many of his dear servants have left upon record, that they have found from him in the day of their distres; and hereby set your souls a longing after him: Press hard after the most close and intimate communion with him, and rest not till you feel your selves revi'd and chear'd with those communications of himself, which he is wont to bestow upon such necessitous, hungrie souls, as being not onlie empried of the creature, but of love to it, breathe after nothing so much, as more of God. And when you are thus rejoicing in him, more than in all riches, what is it that can sadden you? when you are satisfied in him as with marrow and fatnes, what want can you feel? But moreover, how may it yet even farther advance you above the troublesome sense of all your pressures, to remember, that your present sweetest and most delicious tastes of Divine favour, are but the overflowings of that cup, which will afford you full draughts to all eternitie; some rivulets streaming from that immense ocean of goodnes and joy, which will never bee exhausted. But of this (as I promised) I now come to speak by it self, and shall mention nothing more.

6. Wherefore, Lastly, for your support and chearing under all the troubles that are com'n upon you, Remember, *There is a rest remains for all you that are the people of God*; an everlasting happines to bee enjoied with him, when the world and all its works shall bee vanisht and gone. Do you not know there is a time coming, and apace it comes, when you shall know God (in some measure) as you are known by him, clearlie; when you shall please him, and be pleas'd in him perfectlie; when

you shall love him, and be lov'd by him feelinglie; when you shall enjoy this blisful ravishing communion with him eternallie? Is there such an inexpressible glorie at this purchas't for you, and revealed to you by the Lord Jesus, and can you come into that condition wherein you may not rejoice in hope of it? Why did he tell you of this, but *that his joy might remain in you, and your joy might be full?* That your belief of this future advancement, might keep you from sinking and fainting in the lowest estate? Is it comelie for a Prince, the Heir of the Crown, to lament the loss of a farthing? And are your losses any greater (though the summe of them should amount to thousands and millions) if compar'd to your inheritance, *who are heirs of God, coheirs with Christ?* What though a temporal estate be lost, since it is no less than an eternal Kingdome which you have in reversion? Imagine you heard Christ saying to you, *Though your Houses be burnt, yet let not your hearts bee troubled, in my Fathers house are many mansions; though now you are tost up and down, yet shortly I'le take you to the place I have prepar'd, whence you shall never remove more.* And does hee not speak to this purpose in his Gospel, *John* 14. 1, 2, 3. Though this you liv'd in bee no *continuing City*, yet *there is one to come*, which you are now seeking after. When you stand gazing upon the heaps that once were houses, and are ready to mingle your tears with their dust; lift up your eies and your mindes, and think of those streets of the new *Jerusalem*, which have another kinde of beautie than *London* in all its glorie, and this join'd with a stabilitie that will never suffer them to bee turned into Rubbish. What a priviledge is it now accounted, to have an estate in Land for a reserve, when that in Houses or Wares is gone? But what is it to have that *better country*, which the Patriarchs sought, even the Celestial *Canaan*, for an heritage? which is subject to none of those casu-

casualties, that all kinde of earthlie possessions are? what though you have it not in hand, yet if you bee the Children of God, 'tis as sure as if you had; and when you are com'n to age, grown up into a fitness for it, you shall certainly possesse it. Though your Bills and Bonds may be burn't, yet so are not the Promises which convey this inheritance: though your Bibles themselves should be burnt, yet the Covenant of Grace remains firm; Heaven and Earth shall sooner pass away, than one tittle of Gods Word fail. And you have already the first-fruits of this your future portion, *viz.* the indwellings of the Holy Spirit, which may assure you the fulness of glory remains for you in the heavens. And both these it was that made the Christians, I before mencioned, *to take joyfully the spoiling of their goods; as knowing they had in themselves* (for so plainly the words lie in the Original) *a better substance* (the Graces of the Spirit) *and enduring in the Heavens*, (Glory it self) *Heb.* 10.34. Wherefore instead of making such a matter of your petie losses, pray for your selves, as *Paul* for his *Ephesians*. *That God would give you the Spirit of wisdome and revelation in the knowledge of him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightned, that you may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the Saints*, Ephes. 1. 17, 18. For did you clearlier know this, you would judge it more reasonable for the wealthiest Citizen to bee dejected for his losses than you, whose verie earnest is of more value than all his wealth. 'Tis you, Sirs, and you only, who know no end of your riches, neither as to their greatness, or duration, whereas all others may be fathom'd and exhausted: If God be infinite and everlasting, so is your portion; when you are reflecting upon your losses, consider your selves as upon the borders of the other world, and see how they dwindle into a matter of nothing: *A man that's now going to be for ever perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God, hath*

lost a little money by the way. Oh heavie chance! If you were to die within this moneth or year, how little would this affect you? For you know how these things are needed and valued on the other side the grave, how Angels and Saints care for heaps of gold: How short a while then would you have been better for all that's gone from you? And can you not over-look that inch of time betwixt you and approaching death? Forethink, moreover, how less than nothing these now so terrible things will appear, when you are got safe into heaven, what is it to *Lazarus* in *Abraham's* bosome, that once he lay at *Dives* his gate? And will it be any thing to you what a loss you had in 1666. when you are lodg'd in Eternitie? Why then should that be so much to you now, which will shortlie be as if it had never been? To conclude, when all you are plac't so advantageouslie in that higher state, whence you may take a view of the whole Series of Providence, and the several means whereby the good of the Church and your own particular Salvation were carried on, and shall see what a tendencie those Dispensations had to this end, which here seemed most dark and amazing, how will you be rais'd to the admiration of his Wisdome and Power who sate at the Stern, and by all these strange transactions fulfilled the counsel of his own most blessed will? And the fore-thoughts of this, should now beget in you the like frame, whilst you believe that which yet you cannot see.

From all that hath been said is farther manifest, what a vast difference there is betwixt your condition, who are Gods peculiar people, and theirs who are strangers to him, whilst to outward appearance your sufferings are the same; and therefore how fit is it that your demeanour should be accordinglie better than theirs? It becomes not you to think or speak at the rates they do. For a man to have his worldlie interest, and all hopes of recovering it quite broken, is with them to be utterlie undone;

done; so they plainlie speak, and such are their verie thoughts: But will you judge your selves *undone*, whilst you have God dwelling within you, and an heaven where you shall ever dwell with God? Undone indeed you would be, if your God was gone as theirs is; and therefore blame not the poor men if they take on, *for what have they more?* But all you the Favourites and Heirs of Heaven, Children of the Most High, to whom you professe to have whollie given up your selves, to you I conclude my Exhortation as I began it, that you would not discover any such sorrow or impatience, under this Providence, as suits not with your Honourable Relation and Profession; or as speaks you both unmindful of the many great reasons you have for contentednes and joy, and careless of improving them when they are suggested to you.

Two more Objections which may here probably be started, I would willinglie remove.

Object. 1. *Some may say, yes indeed, if we had assurance of the love of God, that we are his children, and should for ever live with him in glory, we could comfortably bear all that he hath laid upon us, as proceeding from love: But how can we, when we have reason to fear the contrary, and to regard his judgements as tokens of his displeasure against us for our sins?* To the several things in this Objection, I shall frame an answer in two or three particulars, very briefly.

1. If indeed you want assurance of Gods love (whereby I mean such well-grounded hopes and comfortable apprehensions thereof, as ordinarilie prevail over your doubts and fears, and enable you chearfullie to expect death and judgement.) If, I say, you have not this, is it not your wisest course diligentlie to set your selves to attain it, in the use of those means that are prescribed to that purpose, rather than to sit still and faintlie give way to your despondencies, and thereby aggra-

vate all other troubles into an intollerable weight? Would this assurance be so profitable (as you your selves acknowledge) and so fortifie your spirits against all assaults whatever, and will you not be quickned to look after it? Since, in that measure I have mention'd, it may be got and kept by diligent, humble, watchful Christians. The method you can hardlie be ignorant of, it being so plain and so frequentlie prest upon you, viz. That you should studie well the terms of the Covenant of Grace, and examine whether you are willing to come up to those terms; that you should search the Scripture, what manner of persons it tells you shall be saved; and then search your own hearts whether you be such, and if you are not, without any more delay, to do what in you lies to become such. And not to digress now to the laying down of marks and signs, let me onlie wish you to consider what I have before intimated, *That your patient bearing of Gods hand is a singular evidence of your sincerity*: For since the principal effect of true Religion is, to subject the soul to the Will of God, then a subjection to such instances of it as are so cross to our carnal inclinations, is a good discovery of a truly Religious man. He that *keeps himself so unspotted from the world*, that he is neither polluted with inordinate love to it, whilst in his hands, nor muddied with foul and turbulent passions when is taken out of them, his *Religion is pure and undefiled before God*. To bridle these motions of the heart, as well as of the tongue, shew our *Religion* not to be *vain*. But take heed of perverting this to your farther trouble, crying out, that you then perceive your condition worse than ever, since you are so far from this temper of mind; but rather be engag'd to greater industry with your hearts now at length to bring them thereto, since when you have done this, from this patience and meekness may flow that assurance which hitherto you have sought in vain;

vain; for by the exercise of Grace, the being and truth of it is best discovered.

2. If you judge that it is for your sins you now suffer, and Conscience tells you plainlie and trulie, what those sins are, your onlie way is humblie to acknowledge them before God, to repent of and speedilie set against them, that hereby you may get a pardon, and the sense of it, and so may attain to satisfaction and comfort.

3. And know farther, this sincere and ingenuous repentance which God requires at your hands, is no way inconsistent with that quiet frame of spirit which I advise you to: He calls for no unprofitable, perplexing grief, but for that alone which may be for your good, which may bring you more thorowlie from the love of sin, and so be a means to joy it self. And easilie may you conceive, that this godlie sorrow for sin may well consist with patience under suffering: for cannot a man, whose excess hath brought him into a Surfeit, at the same time be griev'd for that folly which procur'd his sickness, and yet content with the bitter Physick which may cure him of it?

4. Furthermore, Need I tell you what an unsound argument it is, to conclude from your afflictions, that you are not in favour with God? Do you think it reasonable or safe, to argue from our prospering in the World, that we are beloved of him, and our wayes well pleasing to him? And is there any more reason to judge the contrarie from our adversitie? Were the Apostles, when exercis'd, as upon a Theatre, with sufferings of all sorts, disesteemed by God? Or when he brought forth *Job*, to combat with those evils which Satan had libertie to bring against him, did he do it because he was angry with him, or did not love him? Though his friends indeed would needs have had it so, yet that good man was so just both to God and himself, that he would not believe them.

And

And though you for the same reason should meet with the same charge of hypocrisie, or any other crimes, deal but faithfullie with your selves, and if your Conscience bear witness to your integritie before God, be not moved from the belief and comfort of it, either by your sufferings, or the censures that for their sakes may be fastened upon you: Both may serve as trials of your Grace, but neither are sufficient proofs of any such guilt.

Yea, lastly, Grant that for some particular sins you are afflicted, yet have I not shewn, that even this may be an evidence of Gods love, and so far a ground of comfort to you? Is it not love to reduce you to himself from those waies that might be your ruine? He that should pluck you back, when in an humor you was running to drown your self, though he might tear your cloathes in strugling, yet should have your heartie thanks, when you were com'n to a better mind. Pray tell me, cannot you hate your sin, and yet love your selves? Yea, do you not then love your selves best, when you do most against it? And may not God do so too? Your sin he hates, and wills the death of it, and sends afflictions to that end; but all this while he loves your souls, and therefore takes this course with their Enemies. What reason then have you but to acknowledge this love, and submit to all its methods for your recoverie? And by this your compliance with, and improvement of his dealings, you may best make it out that they came from love, and therefore are to be born comfortablie, according to your own confession.

Object. 2. Some again perhaps will replie, *You have said much to comfort us under all our losses, and the poverty they have brought us to: But is it possible for them to take comfort, that have nothing for themselves nor families to live upon, but may, for ought we know, within a while be brought to*

men to starve to death: Can any man living hold up in such a condition as this? Or can any ground of support be administred?

Answ. Yes, blessed be God very much; since he hath so well consulted for us, that there is no poison in nature without its attending antidote; no trouble *common to men*, for which there is not suitable provision made.

1. I would have you call to mind how much is said in Scripture to secure Gods servants from these fears. You know that *godliness hath the promise of this life, and that which is to come:* You are bid not to perplex your selves with thoughts what you shall eat and wear, since your heavenlie Father knows what you need, and will take care for you accordingly. *When the young Lions suffer hunger, they that fear the Lord shall want no good thing: Their bread shall be given them, and their water shall be sure; and their souls shall be kept alive in famine. David* in his time *had not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his Seed begging bread.* And though these, with a multitude the like, are not to be taken altogether absolutelie, yet I suppose its seldome known but they are in some measure made good to all the godlie. It is but a verie few in the hardest times (if we except extraordinarie famines) that perish for lack of food; but when did you know a good man do so? And why should you think that will happen to you which so seldome doth to any?

2. You cannot, I believe say, that this is yet your condition, that your wants are so pinching that you have no way of relief left you any longer. Did your Children ever yet ask bread when you had it not to give them? Have you not still one way or other found succour at your greatest need? And yet have not your straits been as great as ever they are like to be? And have you not the same God to depend upon? How exceedinglie displeased was he with the unbelieving murmurings of the *Israelites*,

Israelites, who had oft beheld his power imployed for their seasonable relief? And why should not your experience engage you to trust in him? Especiallie since this is the best way to have his promises fulfilled to you; I mean, by your relying upon him for whatever you want, with this perswasion, that if it be good for you, it shall be given in; and that it proceeds not from lack of power, truth or mercie in God, if you go without it. Is it not against all reason, and your own ease, by unbelief and carnal fears to anticipate your troubles, and by frightful imaginations to put your selves to greater pain than ever your condition is like to do? Are we not told, that *sufficient for the day is the evil thereof*; and taught to pray for *daily bread*? Perhaps you have not another day to live, and then you are provided for; or if you have, this daies bread is a good pledge that it shall be given to morrow. And remember, there may be a greater distance betwixt you and starving than you imagine, onlie perhaps you take it for a grievous matter to live at lower rates than you were heretofore wont.

But lastlie, Suppose the thing you fear should come upon you, even that you and yours should come to die for want of bread, yet is there no such intollerable evil herein, that either the fore-thoughts, or the feeling of it, should overwhelm your spirits, and leave you destitute of all comfort. It is not this, as dreadful as it seems, that can make a good man miserable, why then should it affright you so much? Lay aside, I entreat you, all passion and prejudice, and calmlie consider the verie truth of the case: Can starving bring any thing worse than death? And may not the Command of Christ here be of force; That we should not *fear that which can kill the body only, and then hath nothing more to do*? What will it be to you, when once its over, what death you died on? Will the joyes of heaven be the less for the pains of that death

that

that brought you thither? Nay, and as to matter of pain, queſtionleſs manie a rich man, who hath long lain tortured with the Gout, or Stone, hath felt more pain than ever poor man did, though famiſht to death. And as to the diſgrace, (which is reckoned one of the worſt miſeries of povertie) it is but matter of Opinion, which a wiſe man ought to live above. And if it may the more convince you, hear what a verie Heathen ſpeaks to this purpoſe: *Thou art afraid* (ſaith he) *leaſt thou ſhouldſt want neceſſaries; art thou ſo blinde that thou canſt not foreſee whither this want will bring thee? even thither, that a Feaver or any mortal wound does, namely, to death. And haſt thou not often gloried of thy willingneſs to die? True, but my Children will famiſh alſo; what then? Will this carry them any whither elſe? Is not the paſſage the ſame, and the ſtate after death the ſame? Wilt thou not therefore, with a mind fortified againſt all fears of hunger and want, look thitherward, whether Emperours and Kings, and the richeſt upon earth muſt at length deſcend? Only thou perhaps mayſt be kill'd with penurie, they with drunkenneſs and gluttonie.* What a ſhame is it then for a Chriſtian to be daunted with thoſe things which an Heathen could perceive ſo harmleſs? Though he could tell ſo little of any ſtate after death that ſhould make amends for the troubleſome paſſage into it. Know then for certain, that whilſt God hath any work for you to do on earth, hee'l maintain you in it: Rather will he rain Manna from heaven, or turn the ſtones into bread, than let his ſervants want, whilſt he ſees fit to have their daies lengthened out. But when he is pleaſed to cut off the thread of life, you may well enough bear it, to have the ſtaff of life withdrawn. When your journey's at an end, what need you take care for proviſion for the way? And needs muſt your proviſion laſt as long as your journey; for when it all fails, your journey's at an end. As the good woman valiantlie, when the Popiſh Perſecutors

threatned

threatned to take away her food; Why then, saith she, *God will take away my stomack.* So when you are out of a capacitie of having maintenance, you shall soon be put needing it. And in the meantime question not, but God will bring you through whatever he brings you to: Wherefore let the confidence and resolution of *Habakkuk*, be yourselfo, that though there should neither be fruit in the field, nor meat in the shambles, yet *you will rejoyce in the Lord, and joy in the God of your Salvation, Hab.* 3. 17, 18. Now though the fears of this calamity are for the most part very groundlesse, yet I was willing to suppose a case as bad almost as is possible to fal out, that you might bee convinc'd, there is no such condition whereinto you can be brought, that doth necessitate, or will justifie your dejection and distrust.

And if indeed *the people are in so happy a case whose God is the Lord*, that no calamities need affright nor can undo them: then let me hence take rise for an exhortation (wherewith I shall conclude) to all the serious and true hearted Christians in the Land, into whose hands these lines may fall, *that in the midst of all the miseries and dangers wherewith we seem surrounded and threatned, they would be of good chear, summon up their fainting spirits, and fortifie themselves to a resolute, undaunted expectation of the worst that may befall us.*

Let the Sinners in *England* be afraid, and let fearfulnesse surprize the hipocrite, but let him that walketh righteously be bold as a Lion, since his dwelling is on high, and his place of defence the munition of rocks. Fear not you their fear, neither bee afraid, but sanctifie the Lord of Hosts himself, let him bee your fear, let him be your dread: for hee is your Light, and your Salvation; whom should you fear? He is the strength of your heart, of whom should you be afraid? Let your mindes be stayed on him, who will keep them in perfect peace, even in the

the Lord Jehovah, in whom there is everlasting strength; and they that trust in him shall be as mount *Zion*, which cannot bee removed: for as the mountains are round about *Jerusalem*, so the Lord is round about his people, henceforth even for ever. Wherefore though you walk even through the valley of the shadow of death, yet fear none ill, since God is with you, who is a very present help in trouble, whose name is a strong tower, whereto the Righteous run and are safe. When *Saul* the Commander of an Armie, and Ruler of a Kingdome may, in the anguish of his minde, run to a witch for relief; and *Achitophel* the great Politician may have recourse to an halter, yet are they never in any case destitute of a refuge, who are acquainted with the Almightie, and dwell under the shadow of his wings. Does God, even your God, reign in the earth, and will you fear any thing that can betide you whil'st you are in it? Are you not alwaies in his hands, and where else can you be safer than there? Must you not trust your souls with him, when you go hence to that other world, to which you are yet so strange? And be wholly at his disposing, what employment, societie, and condition you shall bee in for ever. Can you then trust him for eternitie, and not for a year or two till you come thither? As confused as the affairs of this world may seem, he hath not cast them out of his hands, but governs all in perfect order, according to the nature and capacitie of the subject. When storms arise that seem to threaten the ship you are in, you may apprehend him saying to you, *Be of good chear, it is I; I that raise (or at least permit) and I who will lay their troublesome tempest.* It would not indeed (as the principal Philosopher saies) be worth while, to live in a world destitute of Providence: but this is not so. No events can befall, without the permission of that *will*, which you dailie pray *may be done*; and is in some sense done, *on earth as it is in heaven*; so

that

that I may say, the whole world is rul'd according to your praiers. And need you fear any thing from the will of God, since it is his eternal and unchangeable decree, that nothing shall make those men miserable, who love him, and submit themselves to his righteous administrations? Whilst therefore you live under his government, as you alwaies do, and can meet with nothing but what he is pleas'd should come to pass (as you never can) how boldlie may you hold on your course, though encountred with all those terrours which dismay the faint-hearted, and cause them to run hither and thither, trembling and lamenting? Fire and Sword, Pestilence and Famine, though they may well terrifie those that converse with creatures only (having no better a portion, and no greater strength, than what they afford) yet the man that is arm'd with a self-resignation to, and confidence in God, may with an unbroken minde, march through the thickest troops of these deaths and dangers: as having God for his felicitie, from whom they cannot force him; and for his continual help, and therefore they cannot vanquish him. Yea, may I not adde, he beholds all these as fighting under the Banner of the Lord of Hosts, whose servant he is, and whose cause he hath espoused: Why then should he be more afraid to go through them, than some known friend of the Generals, is to walk through the midst of his armed men? Though he may go by the mouths of Cannons ready fixt, and the points of drawn Swords, yet he dreads them not, since these instruments of death are prepar'd for their enemies, not their friends. When any of these overflowing scourges pass over a Nation, and seem to take all before them, yet then have the Righteous the same securitie and privilege, that *Noah* and his company in the Ark had, in the time of the Deluge; what if I should say, the same that the fishes then had above all other Creatures left

our?

out? For whilst they continue in compliance with that will which orders all things for them, they are never out of their proper element; whilst they follow this Providence, and keep out of the by-paths of wickedness, they are still in their way. Not but that their bodies are as weak as other mens, and their outward enjoiments subject to the same casualties: but their souls are of another temper, and their happiness of another nature, and cannot be destroied or lost. Boldly may they defie all the Hosts of hell or earth that rise up against them, since none of these can keep them from God whilst they live, and do but translate them to him when they die. Well therefore may you, whose interests are so securely plac't, out of the reach of all violence and malice; sing aloud with the blessed Apostle, whilst in the midst of his battles; he justly triumphs like a Conquerour; *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress, persecution or famine, nakedness, peril or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerours, through him that loved us: For I am perswaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor heighth, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Rom. 8. 35, 37, 38, 39. And what can be more comely, than all you upright ones, to return thanks and praise to that God, who hath dealt so graciously with you? And to rejoyce in your felicity, which he hath made so secure and inviolable? Instead of continual complainings of this misery, and the other which is upon us, or fearful prophesyings of worse yet to come, wherewith many are overmuch taken up. *Let the high praises of God be in your mouths*, who hath done so much for you, to make you at all times safe, and therefore comfortable. Blesse him with all your Souls, for his inestimable love to mankinde, which he hath reveal-

ed by Jesus Christ, *in whom hee is reconciling the world to himself*, and hath actually done that work upon you, whereby it comes to pass, that being reconciled to the Creator, the whole Creation is so far at peace with you, that all the Creatures which stand on his side will not hurt you, and they that are his enemies cannot. Praise your Redeemer, who by his death hath slain your foes, spoil'd principallities and powers, disabled Satan, overcom'n the world, and taken the sting out of all affliction and death it self; that you might walk securely through this vale of tears, and depart out of it cheartully. Oh praise his name, that hee hath kept you from being destroyers of your selves, and will keep all other things from destroying you. Bee thankful to him for the glorious light of his Gospel, and for enlightning your mindes therewith, whereby you are made acquainted with the true nature of all things that concerns you; that so you might neither be startled with those Bugbears, which the fears and fancies of weak and guilty men, in the dark apprehend so terrible, nor fall into those real mischiefs, which ignorant benighted sinners run upon to their own destruction. God hath already done much for you, and hath given you promises of very much more; praise him therefore for what you have, and for what you hope for: Especially for the dawnings of Heaven in your souls, and for the promises of a fuller glory hereafter, to be revealed in you. And through the hopes of this, bee you ever *filld with peace and joy in beleiving*. And with the frequent meditation of all his loving-kindness, be still *making melody in your hearts to the Lord, giving thanks alwaies for all things unto God and our Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

I have before endeavoured to take off those hindrances to this frame which might arise from worldly crosses: for if they so little deserve our sorrow, when they

they befall us (as I have fullie manifested) how much leſs do they deſerve our ſorrow and fear, leaſt they ſhould? And indeed it was my deſign, not onlie to comfort thoſe that have met with troubles, but to prepare others for whatever they may meet with. But there is yet another Objection behind, that may appear of more weight than any of the former, which I cannot altogether paſs over in ſilence, ſince fain I would do ſomething for the removal of all ſhelters and pretences for carnal fears and faintings, which do ſo much pinch and wrong Chriſtian ſouls, hinder the pleaſantneſs and benefit of their Societie, and eclipſe the glorie of their profeſſion.

Object. Perhaps then ſome may tell me, *That this is an unſeaſonable time to call men to joy and chearfulneſs, when ſuch heavy judgements lie upon us, and ſuch a black cloud hangs over us, (and God is angry with thoſe who takes no notice of, nor lay to heart his hand) when we conſider alſo the low eſtate of Gods Church, both at home and abroad. When the Church in former times was in ſuch a condition, we find what bitter lamentations holy men were wont to make: The loſs of the Ark coſt* Eli's *life, and* Nehemiahs *ſorrow of heart, when* Jeruſalem *lay waſte, was ſo great, that the King took notice of it by the change of his countenance,* Neh. 2.2. *Why then ſhould it not be ſo with us?*

Anſw. 1. In anſwer wherero, Firſt let me repeat the Caution I have before laid down, that you ſhould not think I am perſwading you to be regardleſs of Gods hand ſtretcht out againſt us; neither think, I beſeech you, that I perſwade you to any ſuch mirth and jollitie which might manifeſt this regardleſneſs. This is indeed provoking to God, when he calls to Faſting, Humiliation, and girding with Sackcloth, to behold killing of Sheep, and ſlaying of Oxen, Banquets and Revellings, with all kind of exceſs and braverie: 'Tis to none of this that I

call you, not to haunt Taverns and Playhouses, feastings and dancings, to sing and drink away your reason and fears together; rather do you pitie their distraction who take this course, whilst they may deride your seriousness. So far am I from this, that on the other hand, I do earnestlie desire you to labour for the most awakened apprehensions of Gods dealings with us, and the design of them, that you may be suitablie affected therewith, and meet him in the way of his judgements, rightlie behaving your selves under the same: But all this may be done without slavish dejections and terrours, which onlie I plead against.

3. Yea furthermore, as to what evils may be yet hanging over us, my counsel also is, that you would so far apprehend and expect them, as may put you upon the use of those means which are likeliest to prevent them, or as may tend to prepare you for them, whilst your fears have no worse effects than to quicken you to dailie earnest strivings with God on the behalf of this poor Nation, and to a careful Reformation of your selves and families, and a serious endeavour (according to your place and capacitie) that others should do the like, in order to the removal of what judgements we feel, and the prevention of those we fear; this while I condemn them not. Moreover, whilst you are so representing to your selves the worst that can in all likelihood happen, that you may not be surpriz'd thereby, but may get furnisht with suitable strength and comfort, you act wiselie: But this is a different thing from entertaining such misgiving, ghastlie fore-thoughts thereof, as onlie weaken and torment you. Hath not Christ bid his servants when they *hear of wars, and rumors of wars, to see they be not troubled*? And in all the calamities that came upon the *Jews*, God would still have the Remnant that was faithful, spoke comfortablie to. In those great and asto-

astonishing changes which God makes in the world, rooting up Kingdomes for the wickednes of the Inhabitants, translating the Gospel from one Nation to another; we performing our dutie, must lay our hands on our mouths, stand on the Lords side, and acknowledge he is righteous in all his waies; as remembring, *it is not our work to govern the world, but to submit to him that does.*

3. The same again may be said as to those disorders which you complain of, at home or abroad, so far as your trouble hath a tendencie toward their removal, or any other good end, it is a dutie, but no farther. I'le joyn with you a little in complaining and acknowledge, that its sad to think how great a part of the world lies buried in Heathenish darkness, idolatrie and infidelitie, and how little is done by Christians toward their relief; especiallie that the Princes of Christendome do no more imploy their interests to that purpose, as if the pettie temporal concerns of their Crown and Kingdome were of greater moment. Sad also it is to see Christendome it self so wofullie divided and crumbled into Parties and Factions, through the carnal designs of ambitious covetous men, under the gilded pretences of Catholick peace and unitie; and how great a part of it by this means is over-spread with ignorance, impietie and idolatrie? to the disgrace of our profession, and hindrance of the Conversion of Jews and Heathens. Its sad to observe what a cruel raging thirst there is in these false Christians, after the utter ruine and destruction of all that crouch not to them, but value the Gospel above their rotten Traditions, and senseless sapless Superstitions. And sad it is, that in our own and other Reformed Churches, the divisions should be so great about matters of little moment, whilst the Common Enemie threatens to swallow them up; that the power of Godliness, and all such means as may promote it, are no more set up

and encouraged, that profaneneſs, lukewarmneſs, mutual heart-burnings and diſcontents, ſhould ſo univerſallie poſſeſs us. Theſe are all very ſad conſiderations. But what then? Muſt we therefore ſit down, over-weigh'd with the burdenſome ſenſe of all theſe evils, and ſpend our daies in weeping and wailing, becauſe the World we live in is ſo much out of order? By this means Chriſtians ſhould all turn Diſciples of *Heraclitus* his School. But certainlie the Precepts of Jeſus Chriſt put us upon no ſuch courſe, who would have us live free from all anxious corroding cares, and the verie office of whoſe Spirit it is, to be the *Comforter* of his people. *Mourners in Zion* we may be, but diſconſolate ſelf-tormentors we muſt not. The ſame *Paul* that took *care of all the Churches, rejoyc't in hope of the glorie of God, and did always triumph in Chriſt.* All thoſe evils which I have mention'd may in one word be reduc't to this, that there is ſo much wickedneſs in the world, and ſo little true Religion and fear of God. And this I grant, muſt needs be matter of lamentation to all good men, that love their Maker and their Fellow-creatures, and I wiſh that all our hearts were more kindlie affected herewith. But how is it we ſhould manifeſt our ſelves thus well-affected? Truly moſt of all by endeavouring all that in us lies, that the world may be amended; and ſo far as our prayers, examples, or inſtructions, may do any thing to that end, let us faithfullie apply our ſelves thereto. But ſuch a grief as hurts our ſelves, and offers nothing to the good of others, ought to be avoided: We ſhould not in ſuch an unprofitable manner, mourn for our own ſins; ſurelie then not for other mens. It would go but hardly with us, if the comfort of our lives depended upon ſuch things as are no way in our power to accompliſh. It is indeed well-beſeeming a dutiful Son to be grieved for the diſobedience of his Brethren, but yet not ſo far as to hinder

hinder the pleasure he ought to take in his Fathers love? and the performance of his own duty to him. But this pure and unfeigned sorrow for the wickedness of the world, and the dishonors done to God therein, speaks so much ingenuity of soul, and is so very rare, that I need say little to dehort you from the excess of it; rather I may exhort you to it, to be yet more possest with a bitter hatred of sin and pitty to poor sinners; but not in the least, I beseech you, with hatred or envie of the most prosperous and flourishing of them; and be very watchful over your selves, that no worldlie trouble, not your losses, nor straits, your want of trading, nor heavy payments, lie nearer to your heart, than the Interest of Christ.

4. But if by the low estate of the Church you mean chiefly the Persecution which it is any where under; or which you feel your selves, or apprehend to be coming upon us, I may well say, there is far less cause of sadness upon this account than the former. If God see it good to have his Church purified and refined, by bringing it through the fire, who are we that we should contradict it? Need I mention to you the many benefits that are hereby wont to accrue to Christians, to whom it is appointed as their common Road to heaven? Do you not know that Christ hath bid you then especially to rejoyce and be exceeding glad, when men say and do all manner of evil against you for his sake? Doth not the Apostle reckon it as a gift and priviledge to the *Philippians*, that they did not onlie believe in, but suffer for Christ? *Phil.* 1. 29.

And to these same suffering *Philippians* it was, that he gives that earnest Exhortation, *Rejoyce in the Lord alwayes, and again I say rejoyce, Chap.* 4. 4. And how many more Texts of this sort might I mention, as those also which shew, that such was the joyful spirit of the Apo-

ſtles and Primitive Chriſtians under their perſecutions for the truth. So far ought we to be from ſorrow or ſhame for ſuffering as *Chriſtians*, that we are commanded to *glorifie God on this behalf*, 1 *Pet.*4.16. But here then let me deſire you, as you value the true peace and comfort of your ſouls, to ſee that you indeed ſuffer as *Chriſtians*; both as to what you ſuffer for, that it be no other than the Cauſe of Chriſt; and as to your deſign in imbracing it, that it be purelie for his honor, and then you are likely to ſuffer in that manner that becomes Chriſtians. Beware, I beſeech you, of adhering, with a carnal zeal, to any Sect or Party, for the advancement and flouriſhing whereof you are wholly concern'd, as depending thereupon for your eſtate and eaſe; and chiefly for your Reputation, by the ſucceſs of your Opinion and way. If this ſelfiſhneſs poſſeſs you, it will even then when you ſeem to ſuffer for Conſcience ſake, bewray it ſelf by much-what the ſame effects, that are to be ſeen in the men of this world, when they contend with, and oppreſs one another. It will ſet you a vexing and repining, and fill your mouths with reviling, and your minds with ſpleen againſt thoſe that make you ſmart: And this while you are like to be far from the comfort of a ſuffering ſtate; and no wonder, for tell me truly, Is it not for Self, rather than Chriſt that you are thus affected? Doth Chriſt, do you think, need or deſire that you ſhould have ſuch boiſterous paſſions for his ſake? Doth the wrath of man work the righteouſneſs of God? Wherefore ſee that you are but ſincerely concern'd for Gods Glorie and your own Salvation, and then you'l perceive that in theſe reſpects men cannot hurt or overcome you; and ſo you'l ſee no reaſon to be angry with them, or hate them for any thing they do to you. For by doing the duties, and exerciſing the Graces that are call'd for, and may yet be done, you may glorifie God, and ſave your ſouls,

souls, let men and devils rage, and reign; and do their worst. Let the times be what they will, you have still liberty to serve and please God, though not alwayes in the same works, or after the same manner. Sometimes *Paul* may be glorifying God by preaching boldly in a Synagogue, or in his own hired house; sometimes by lying with his feet in the Stocks, sometimes by pleading at a Bar, and sometimes by preaching in a Prison, though but to the Jaylor and his Familie; and all this while by courage and patience, love to Christ, and zeal for the Gospel and the good of souls, which, according to the variety of occasions and circumstances, still exerted it self one way or other. Religion, as it is an inward living Principle, lies far out of the reach of all created force, and can no more be interrupted or destroyed thereby (whilst the soul is faithful to its self) than the influences of the Stars, or course of the Orbs, can be bound and stopt. It is indeed in the power of man to hinder some external duties, to discountenance and impoverish good men, but what's this to the heart and life of Religion? Though they may disturb the Communion of Christians, yet not that betwixt God and the Soul; 'tis not a stone wall can intercept that: They may put chains on the feet, but not on the affections, nor hinder their outgoings to God, any more than *Xerxes* his Chain (which in a silly rage he threw into a rough Sea) could restrain the swelling of its waves: Though some kind of outward splendour and flourishing of Religion may be eclipst, yet the fruits of the Spirit cannot, by the nipping Frosts of Persecution, be blasted. Such as the Apostle mentions, *Gal.* 5. 22, 23. *Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance*; of these I may say as he does (though in another sense) *against such there is no Law*: Or though there should be a Law, yet there is no power against them. Though Enemies persecute

you,

you, yet you may love and pitty them, whether they will or no: Though they should stop your mouths, yea, pluck out your tongues, yet you may pray for them, and forgive them; you may be humble, patient, holy, and heavenly in despite of all opposition, and were but all Professours such, Religion would flourish at another rate, than meerly by having the favour of great ones, and the riches and honours of the world entail'd upon their profession. I wonder whether Religion flourisht more for the first three hundred years after Christ, or after that it became the Religion of the Empire: Whether when men lost estates by embracing it, or when they got them by professing it?

Was it Fire and Faggot, or Ease and Honours, that were the poison of the Church! And was it the blood of Martyrs, or the wealth of the Professors, that was the seed of the Church? Wherefore let us not so much complain of any thing in the Times, as of our own sloathfulness and dulness, of the earthliness and unbelief of our hearts, and the unsuitableness of our lives, for obscuring the lustre of Religion: And if Adversity may scoure off all the rust and filth which ease and prosperity contracted, we shall have cause to praise him, *who sits as our refiner.*

And here by the way, let mee suggest; that there is much difference betwixt the state of the *Jewish* and the Christian Church: That was under a lower and more carnal dispensation, both as to the frame of their minde, their service and promises. They had not (generally) so great a measurre of the spirit as was afterward to be poured forth, nor so clear revelations of the future glory, neither therefore was it so prest upon them, that the way thereto was, through many tribulations, which made them so extreamly scandaliz'd at that strange doctrine of Christ, that they must leave friends, lands, life, and

sod all for his sake, if they would be his Disciples, and have a treasure in Heaven. But especially take notice, what a dependance their Worship had upon external things, being confin'd so much to the Temple in *Jerusalem*, and consisting in such Sacrifices and Ceremonies which could not other-where be performed; and therefore they might well be much concern'd for the continuance and restauration of that place, whereto Gods peculiar presence was limited; and upon this account they were more obnoxious to enemies, and stood greatly in need of their favour, when conquered by them. But now in all these respects the case is different. The Apostles did not stay for *Cæsars* leave, nor depend upon his aid for building the Christian Church, the new *Jerusalem*, as the *Jews* did upon *Cyrus* for the Old: (Though I grant the countenance of the Civil Magistrate, to bee a great mercy, neither ought Christians, whether Pastours or People, upon any pretence whatever, to disobey his commands, whilst they do not interfere with Christs:) Nor is it in Temples made with hands (though in such we are to worship him in publick communion) that God now dwells, but in every holy Soul, who at any time, in any place, may worship him acceptably *in spirit and in truth*; And this *Ark of his presence*, the inhabitation of his Spirit, no *Philistine* force can take out of the heart of man. Now by Jesus Christ, hath God so far *sav'd us from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us, that* (though we are more assaulted by them than ever, yet) *we may serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness, all the daies of our life*, as *Zachariah* sings. *Luke* 1. 71, 74, 75. Though Christ told his Disciples, *hee came to send a Sword upon earth*, yet hee tells them also, that his peace should abide in their hearts, *Joh.* 14. 27. *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world gives, give I unto you*: For the world indeed gives peace, by removing

moving outward troubles, but my peace ſhall poſſeſs and ſecure you in the midſt of them (as a learned Commentator gloſſes upon the words) and therefore he adds that injunction, which I have been ſo long inculcating, *Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be affraid.*

And to finiſh my anſwer, let mee, in the laſt place, wiſh you toremember ſeriouſly and believingly, that what ever preſſures the Church of God, now militant upon the whole earth, or any part of it, may lie under; it ſhall, beſides its preſent victory, at length riſe up from under them into the moſt flouriſhing and triumphant ſtate: And all thoſe that are embark't therein, being faithful to her cauſe and quarrel, and ſharing in all her afflictions, ſhall alſo partake of her glory. Even now, I ſay, all ſincere Chriſtians by their faith overcome the world, yea, when they ſeem moſt overcome by it; like their Maſter, they conquer, when upon the croſs: For it is not with him as with temporal Monarchs, whoſe intereſt is ruin'd, when their Subjects are deſtroy'd, or impoveriſht; But his Kingdome is oft promoted by the ſufferings and ſlaughters of his followers. Nor therefore ſhould we ſerve him with ſuch kinde of apprehenſions as common ſubjects are wont to have, in their quarrels for their King and Countrey, who are beforehand doubtful of the event, and being vanquiſht, bewail themſelves, and pitty their Prince. But hee whoſe battle we fight, does not ſo need our lives or fortunes, that his ſtrength ſhould be weakned by their loſs. Nor does he let his enemies ſo far prevail over his Church, becauſe through their power and policy they are too hard for him: Though there was not a man upon earth that would ſtand on his ſide, he would know well enough how to deal with the greateſt Potentates and Politicians of them all, as they will, ere long, know to their coſt: But hee bears thus with them (beſide other ends which will hereafter

after be better known) that the Graces which hee hath given to his Servants may bee exercised, and that they may have opportunities of demonstrating, that they love him to the death. And this is all he cares for or requires, and whilst we do thus, whatever becomes of us, we win the field, and are sure of the crown: for our Lords Kingdome, and therefore ours, is not of this world; nor would he therefore have any upon pretence of advancing it, to disturb the world by Massacres and Powder-plots, seditions and tumuls, murdering of Princes, and burning of people. These are fit means indeed to erect some *Babel* of carnal interest, but not for the building up of Christs Church: He knows how to defend and exalt it, without any such officious wickedness, as some men by all means would bring to his assistance. And as it is not for want of power or love, that Christ suffers his Spouse for a while to be trampled upon, by the feet of pride and cruelty; so hee will at length discover both, in delivering her thence, and placing her with himself in glory. He that purchast his Church with his own blood, will not be fully satisfied till she partakes of the highest benefits of his costly undertaking. As in his own person he hath combated and overcome all the Powers of Hell and Death, so he will go on conquering and to conquer, till he hath finisht the same work for, and in his body. Now hee is purifying it from all spots and wrinckles, and will hereafter present it to himself beautiful and glorious. Why then should not all the followers of this victorious Leader, march on, with courage in their hearts, sereneness in their looks, and songs of praise in their mouths, as travelling to *Zion*? where *everlasting joy shall bee upon their heads*, and all remnants of *sorrow and mourning shall flee away*.

Wherefore stir up your selves, I beseech you Christians, sit not alwaies poring upon miseries, and overlooking

ing mercies, making things worse than they are, and vexing your selves with needless fears. Remember still, *that a Childe of God in the way to his Fathers house, hath more matter of joy and thankfulness, than of sadness and complaining:* Let it appear that you beleive so by your deportement. And that you may rise up to this truely excellent spirit, let me beseech you, in one word, *To see that you live up to the principles of the Christian Religion.* Be affected toward the world, and all its pomps and vanities, as you are engag'd by your Baptism: Ever sit loose from it, and regard it not as any peice of your happiness. 'Tis this fills mens mindes with anguish and care, even the fears of being depriv'd of their estates and friends, their fleshly ease, their lives and liberties. But consider you, that it's impossible to have a sure hold of these things, and therefore the way never to be troubled for them, is, not to let them have hold of your hearts. You have liv'd to see in two years more men taken from their estates, and more estates taken from the owners, than in so short a time hath almost been ever known: Let both teach you what regard to have, either to life it self, or the appurtenances of it. Let your comfort in prosperity, be deriv'd from God and Christ, the first fruits and promises of heaven, then may it be constant and unchangeable, as the grounds of it are. Ever be inculcating it upon your selves, that God is your felicity, and labour to make and keep it clear, that he is your God. Therefore, as you love your lives, and the comforts of them, take heed of sin, of all sin, which will blot your Evidences, and make you of abject, cowardly spirits; so that instead of fetching comfort from approaching to God, this will fill you with horrour, and make you run from him as an enemy, and then nothing in the whole creation can releive you. But yet, believingly live upon the Mediator, by him to have all breaches heal'd betwixt God and

and your Souls, and by his Spirit to have your souls healed of all their distempers. Rest in nothing as an evidence of your interest in him, below an earnest desire, and sincere endeavour to grow up in him, to bee like to him, and to fulfil all the gracious precepts of his Gospel: And having this evidence, let no temptations or doubtings rob you of the comfort it may afford. Remember, that as your happiness consists in communion with God, so this is not perfectly to be enjoy'd till after Death and Judgement. Wherefore live alwaies chearfully, apprehensive of the certainty and nearness, of approaching death; let your great business bee to get fitted for it, and let all your main designs be so laid, that they may not be blasted, but accomplish't by it. When once you have done this, you have little more to fear at one time than another, and nothing at any time: For to Death, you are in a manner alwaies alike liable, and this is the worst that any mortal power can bring upon you, onely they may make it more gainful and honourable than otherwise it would. What matter is it, whether we dye amongst our enemies, or our friends, since wee then take our leave of both? Whether upon a bed, or on the ground, since our body will so soon bee in the earth? What matter is't, whether the fire of a Feaver, or of a Faggot consume us, whether our souls fly out at our mouths or our throats, since either way they will be alike soon with God.

But Scripture is most of all wont to press our looking and earnest waiting for the coming of Christ: Perhaps, as having less terrour in it to a Believer than death, and as being the time when our fullest glory shall be accomplisht, the whole Body of Christ being then brought together into the presence of their glorified Head, and to a participation of his Glory. And I'le shut up all with an

an earneſt requeſt, that you would comfort and encourage your ſelves with the fore-thoughts of, and ardent longings after, this day of the appearance of the great God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. When ever it is with you, whilſt you are ſailing over this Ocean, as it was with *Pauls* company, *Act.* 27. 20. that neither Sun nor Stars in many daies appear, and no ſmall Tempeſt lies on you, then caſt forth the Anchor of Hope, and wiſh for this day. And fix not your hopes with ſteadineſs on any day ſhort of this, or your dying day. The experience we have had of the long-talkt of, and (by ſome) much hop't-for 66. (beſide other warnings of this kind) may tell us, that they who build their faith upon fancie, do but encreaſe their own troubles, provoke others laughter, and dangerouſly tempt themſelves to Infidelitie. Expect this coming of Chriſt, not to the ſame purpoſe that the Jews did, and ſtill do their Meſſiah; to make you rich, and high, and proſperous in the world, to throw down great men, that you may enter upon their places and eſtates, a poor preferment to a true Saint; but expect him to advance you above ſin and Satan, the world and fleſh, and to raiſe you to the cleareſt, bleſſed Viſion, and fruition of your God. Upon this promiſe of his coming build all your hopes, lay all your ſtreſs, and venture all you have: If this prove falſe, we are all undone, but never till then, nor then neither any worſe than the reſt of the world that believed it not; for there's nothing elſe to hold by but what we are ſure will fail us, and if this fail too, Mankind was made to no more purpoſe than Boys blow up a feather. But never fear it; though the Worldling tells you by his practiſe he believes its falſe; though the profane Swaggerer ſay ſo down-right, and prove it by a jeer, as the more ſullen Atheiſt by his unreaſonable cavils and wranglings, yet believe none

of

of them till you have tryed; they neither are, nor possibly can be, sure of the contrarie, whilst they are in this life; and if there be no other life than this, they'l never be able to upbraid you with your weakness and errour: But if there be (as nothing more sure) let them look to themselves: Then let it be seen whether the moneys of scraping Earth-worms, the mirth and musick, the childish sports and brutish delights of sensual Gallants, the Drollerie and Sophistrie of self-conceited Infidels, will be as good securitie to them, as your faith and holiness, even that which they were wont to deride as follie, proceeding from prejudice, melancholly, or superstition. That will be the trying time, when it shall be known who were wise men, and who were fools, when a righteous and all-knowing Judge shall justly decide the controversie. Oh Sirs, do you look for such a day as this, such an amazing confounding day, when the whole world shall be turned upside down, the earth become fuel for raging flames, and all its Inhabitants brought to account for their actions, and receive their doom to endless joy or woe? And have you any hopes of standing in such a day as this, of beholding our Lord with confidence, when he shall appear in all his Majesty, with thousands of Angels for his Honourable Attendants, when the Heavens above shall ring with the joyful acclamations of these glorious Spirits, and the Saints their Companions, and the Air below shall be fill'd with the yellings and roarings of Devils and damned Ghosts: Do you look, I say, ere long to see such sights as these, and to partake of the glory and joy of that great day? And will you now be much concern'd for the burning of an house or City, or for the busles and confusions of this dreaming world, that will not till then be awakened? Oh unreasonable! that the Saints, who shall shortly meet their Redeemer with comfort, and before all the world be acquitted and

applauded, crown'd and receiv'd into eternal joyes, should now pass their time in so much solitarinesse, and live no more upon the hopes of such a day. And oh monstrous! that sinners, who must shortlie be judged and shamed before all, and sentenc't to the sad Societie of Devils for ever, can yet spend their daies in ease and pleasure, in pampering and adorning their dirty flesh, overwhelm'd with gluttony and drunkennesse, and the cares of this life, as if they were resolved never to think of their miserie till they feel it, and judg'd it better to feel it, than to think of it so as to prevent it. But let them take their course, and see where it will end: But all you the unfeigned friends and followers of the blessed Jesus, who shall be your Judge, let it be your work to fetch comfort from that which is other mens terrour. *When their hearts fail for fear, you must lift up your heads, as knowing your Redemption draws nigh.* Or in S. *James* his words, *Be patient, stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draws nigh.* And nearer it is drawn by sixteen hundred years since these words were wrote; How near then may we now think it? Though how near we cannot say, yet for certain it's not far off. The eyes of them shall not fail that wait for him; he will not frustrate your expectations, as *Sisera* did his Mothers, you who look forth from the prison windows of the flesh, and with her cry out, *Why is his Chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the wheels of his Chariot?* Confidently dare I answer you, yea, you may make answer to your selves, *Our Lord is coming to gather together and comfort all his dispersed, distressed ones, from the several corners of the world; he is coming to give them final and full release from the heavy yoke of Turkish, Popish, and all other bondage and cruelty that remains till that day; he is coming to trample down and overthrow all oppositions to his Government and Scepter, and utterly to destroy the works of the Devil, and all his Adherents;*

he is coming to plead the cause of his righteous servants, to vindicate them and the honour of Religion from all the disgraceful scandals, slanders, and calumnies, which the wickedness of pretended Friends, or the wilful malice of envenomed Enemies, hath cast upon them. He's coming to make all faces and actions bare, to reveal the secrets of all hearts, and discover truth from falshood. He is coming to the confusion and sorrow of all careless and ungodly ones, rich or poor, Princes or People, that thought not on, nor prepar'd for this time; but he comes to the perfect, full, and everlasting Consolation of all believing souls, that are praying and waiting, looking and longing for this blessed day of his appearing. Even so, Come Lord Jesus, come quickly; and let him that readeth say *Amen.*

FINIS.